

**AU College of Veterinary Medicine**  
**Undergraduate Research in Veterinary Biomedical Sciences (VBMS)**

**VBMS 4997 – Honors Thesis**

**Available: Spring, 2010**

**Credit:** Variable (1-3h/Semester)

Maximum 9h (inclusive of hours taken as VBMS 4987 – Honors Research)

Cannot be taken simultaneously with VBMS 4987

**Graded:** Yes (See below)

**Prerequisites:** Honors College; Junior or Senior standing; VBMS 4987 (Honors Research)

Approval by AU-CVM faculty mentor

Approval by Associate Dean for Research & Graduate Studies

**Environment:** Students will work with AU-CVM faculty mentors to develop an honors thesis based upon work completed in supervised honors research (VBMS 4987).

**Learning Outcomes:** Undergraduate honors research and thesis experiences will be structured on a student-by-student basis by AU-CVM/VBMS faculty mentors. Expected outcomes for each research experience must be defined, in writing, by the mentor and a document, signed by both student and mentor, must be filed in the Office of the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies (ORGS) in the AU-CVM and with the AU Honors College (as required) in advance of the initiation of all undergraduate research programs.

Broadly, learning outcomes of the Honors Thesis experience will include, but will not necessarily be limited to: (1) reading-intensive introduction to and review of the scientific literature in an AU-CVM/VBMS-related field; (2) development and refinement of technical writing skills; and (3) development/refinement of oral communication skills associated with oral presentation, discussion and defense of honors thesis research conducted in the AU-CVM/VBMS program.

**Course Content:** Each research experience for undergraduate honors students (REU) will be unique. Therefore, content cannot be standardized. However, AU-CVM/VBMS faculty mentors must define - in writing - the goals and aims of proposed honors REUs with a breakdown of basic activities, definition of all deliverables and a timetable. This 'syllabus' and the related thesis plan will be signed by mentor and student and filed in both the Office of the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies (ORGS) at the AU-CVM and with the Honors College as required.

**Project Requirements for Students:** Students will be required to develop an 'Honors Thesis' based on completed 'Honors Research' activities. Generally, format for the 'Honors Thesis' will follow guidelines for preparation of theses as might be submitted for a graduate degree (ex. M.S.). An AU-CVM/VBMS 'Honors Thesis' would be expected to include the following sections: (1) title / signature page, on which both the student and mentor, as well as their specific academic affiliations, are identified; (2) one page biographical sketch of the student; (3) succinct review of published literature pertinent to the 'Honors Research' project; (4) detailed description of the 'Honors Research' project, to include the following sections - (i) abstract, (ii) introduction, (iii) materials and methods (to include documentation of all required approvals such as animal care and use, human subjects, and biosafety as appropriate) , (iv) results, (v) discussion, and (vi) bibliography.

## **VBMS 4997 – Honors Thesis**

The completed 'Honors Thesis' will be submitted to the mentor for review and evaluation. Once approved by the mentor, the student will prepare an oral presentation (with appropriate visual aids) as an overview of the 'Honors Thesis'. This latter will be presented to the AU-CVM/VBMS mentor, members of the sponsoring laboratory and guests as deemed appropriate by the mentor.

**Grading:** A letter grade will be assigned by the mentor based upon: (1) overall quality organization and content of the written thesis (70%) and; (2) format, content, accuracy and clarity of the oral presentation and response to questions during discussion/defense of the 'Honors Thesis'. Grades: 90-100 (A), 80-89 (B), 70-79 (C), 60-69 (D), <60 (F).