

**Thesis Grading and Honors Determination
Committee on Degrees in Social Studies
Spring 2017**

Social Studies theses are sent to two readers, who provide grades and comments. Graders use a Latin scale, with honors grades ranging from a very rare straight “summa” (the equivalent of an A+) to a “cum minus” (the equivalent of a B-). It is also possible to receive non-honors grades (which revert to a letter grade scale). If the first two grades are more than a Latin grade apart (e.g., “magna plus” and “cum”) the thesis will be sent out for a third reading.

You must pass your thesis and complete both parts of the [oral exam](#) in order to graduate with a degree in Social Studies. Every student in recent memory who has submitted a thesis has passed and graduated.

Social Studies uses a [formula](#) to calculate honors recommendations that takes into account course grades, thesis grades, and oral exam grades. If a thesis has received two readings, both readings will be weighted equally. If a thesis has received three readings, the median grade will be weighted 50% and the two outliers 25% each.

All courses in our five overlapping social science departments (anthropology, economics, government, history, and sociology) count for concentration credit, whether or not they are part of a student’s focus field. In addition, we will count courses outside of these departments that were successfully petitioned to count towards a focus field. We only count course grades earned in the first seven semesters, as we do not have access to eighth semester grades when we determine honors.

The Social Studies faculty meets during the second week of May to discuss and vote on honors recommendations. Our recommendations are “English Honors” and they are necessary but not sufficient for college-wide Latin Honors, which are based on all eight semesters of grades and are subject to college-wide GPA cutoffs. You can learn more about the honors process at the college level by reading the [Harvard College Handbook for Students](#).

Regardless of your Latin Honors outcome, you can list any English Honors you earned in Social Studies on your resume.