Kilachand Research Requirement

Kilachand expects all students to complete a substantial work of research, scholarship, creation, or invention in their chosen field by the close of their senior year. The purpose of senior research is to provide students with a sustained experience of intellectual discovery and an opportunity to share their work with a broader audience. This process begins in the junior year, when students learn to balance the excitement of imaginative approaches to their intellectual interests with the rigor of field-specific methodologies and begin to work on the design of their thesis or project. It continues in the senior year, as students conduct their research, write their thesis or produce their creative project, and assess the significance of the work they have done. The research thesis or project can take a variety of forms, but students must aim for the highest standards of the discipline or interdisciplinary area they select. Students of international relations might write a policy paper; biomedical engineers might invent a device; stage designers might create a set for a specific play; ecologists might design a study of the urban heat environment; journalism majors might create a portfolio of articles; a business student might plan (and launch) a new enterprise; a future teacher might design a curriculum for special needs children.

There are various pathways through which Kilachand students can complete the Kilachand Research Requirement. Regardless of pathway, all Kilachand students present their work at the annual Kilachand Symposium and submit to Kilachand a written component drawing from their project, tailored to the project itself and the discipline it draws upon.

Kilachand Research Pathways

The Keystone Project

The Keystone is the traditional pathway for Kilachand students. Students undertake the Keystone Project individually or in a small group under the supervision of Kilachand Honors College and a faculty advisor of their choosing. In their senior year, these Kilachand students take Innovation, Culture, & Society I & II: KHC HC 501 and KHC HC 502 and enroll in Keystone I & II: KHC HC 503 and KHC HC 504 with their faculty advisor.

CAS Honors

Some students have the opportunity and a compelling reason to complete an honors thesis in their CAS major department. Students pursuing honors in a department that requires a senior honors thesis take Innovation, Culture, & Society I & II: KHC HC 501 and KHC HC 502, but do not enroll in KHC HC 503 and 504 with a faculty advisor. Instead, they enroll in the course credits associated with the honors thesis in their major department.

CAS BA/MA or BA/MS Thesis

Some students complete the requirements of BA/MA and BA/MS programs within the College of Arts and Sciences in four years. Students enrolled in BA/MA and BA/MS programs that require a thesis and who complete these programs in their fourth year take Innovation, Culture, & Society I & II: KHC HC 501 and KHC HC 502, but they do not enroll in KHC HC 503 and 504 with a faculty advisor. Instead, they enroll in the departmental course credits associated with the MA or MS thesis in their major department. Students whose departments do not offer course credits for the MA or MS thesis enroll in KHC HC 503 and KHC HC 504 with their thesis advisor.

College of Engineering Senior Design Project

College of Engineering students take Innovation, Culture, & Society: KHC HC 501 and KHC HC 502, but they do not enroll in KHC HC 503 and 504 with a faculty advisor. Instead, they enroll for the departmental course credits associated with the College of Engineering Senior Design Project.

For students undertaking multiple senior research projects: Some students produce a Keystone Project that is separate from and in addition to an honors thesis, master’s thesis, or Senior Design Project. While the two projects can be related, they must be distinct projects. For example, a College of Engineering student might design a drug that meets the criteria of the Senior Design Project for biomedical engineering and write a policy paper on the pharmaceutical industry for the Kilachand Keystone Project. A group of Kilachand students might collaborate to write, produce, and perform a play, and one of those students may write a research paper about plays dealing with similar topics and themes as their honors thesis for the Department of English. Students who complete a Keystone Project as well as another project or thesis in their major enroll in Innovation, Culture, & Society I & II: KHC HC 501 and KHC HC 502, Keystone I & II: KHC HC 503 and KHC HC 504 with their faculty advisor, as well the departmental course credits associated with the thesis or Senior Design Project.