

# Memorandum

Whitman College

**DATE:** May 19, 2009  
**TO:** Junior Mathematics and Combined Majors  
**FROM:** Doug Hundley, Chair, Department of Mathematics

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**Subject:** Senior Year

Congratulations! Your senior year will be coming up. To get the most out of your experience, it will be to your benefit to start planning for some things early.

## **The Written Exam**

The written exam in mathematics for the 2009-2010 academic year will be given in late September or early October; the exact date will be announced at the beginning of the fall semester. The exam covers topics from the calculus sequence and linear algebra- Since the beginning of the year can be hectic, **you will find it beneficial to study over the summer**. More details and a sample exam will be posted on the department webpage (first link under “Resources for Students”).

## **The Oral Exam**

If you are majoring in Mathematics or Applied Mathematics, then the oral examination is typically scheduled for January, the weekend after we get back from break (students in a combined program will get information from the other department about scheduling). The exam lasts for approximately one hour and you will be questioned by 2-3 members of the Mathematics department. Specific information is on the department webpage (first link under “Resources for Students”).

## **Honors in Major Study**

To be awarded *Honors in Major Study*, you must first pass the written exam with distinction. After that, you may write a proposal for honors that must get the approval of the department (in the meantime, you will be enrolled in the normal Seminar course). You should plan on writing an honors thesis at that time, although it is not approved until you have passed the oral examination with distinction, and you have met the other criteria listed in the college catalog.

*NOTE:* There are several kinds of honors that can be awarded by the College, and they are listed in the Catalog.

## **Graduate Study and Life After Whitman**

As you prepare for the year after Whitman, there are a couple of things you might keep in mind.

- Letters of recommendation.

When asking for a letter of recommendation, you should prepare a packet of information for the letter writer. Such a packet should include things like: A cover letter explaining what your goals are (the more specific you can be the better), a copy of your academic evaluation, a note about which courses you had with the letter writer, a list of the programs you are applying to and the deadlines. More information will be available on the Department website by the Fall.

- When should I start applying for programs starting 2010-2011?

The earlier the better- You might think about getting the applications out about Thanksgiving time. The funding for assistantships goes very quickly, so don't wait until the deadline.