

UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM

Thesis Project **THE SENIOR EXPERIENCE**

Purpose: To provide an opportunity for a graduating senior to research and report on a significant interest derived from his/her academic program. If the program does not lend itself to a formal written thesis, then the student would need to choose an area of interest, and solicit a faculty member for support.

Thesis Options:

- A senior thesis is required of all University Honors Program seniors in good academic standing. A completed thesis is a requirement for graduation with the "University Honors" notation on your transcript. Honors thesis distinction at Commencement is awarded if all requirements are met.
- A senior thesis is required of all University students IN CERTAIN majors. Some majors require a senior capstone performance (direct a play, performance in dance, applied projects in architecture, engineering, or perhaps a musical composition, performance, etc.) Thus, this Honors thesis may take the form of a creative project or report, and could include a variety of methodological approaches.
- Despite the variety, scholarly work accompanies this project, and the Honors Council needs to see evidence of this scholarly endeavor.

Characteristics of an Honors Thesis:

- An Honors thesis is a scholarly piece of writing in which the writer is expected to exhibit a command of the relevant scholarship in his/her field and, in turn, make a considerable contribution to that scholarship.
- Your thesis should consider a topic (agreed upon by you and your mentor) that requires serious research, and contributes to your field. These projects could include any of the following: critical or textual analysis, creative performance or exhibit, a business plan, interpretation of a text or art object, original creative project, laboratory or field experiment and analysis, case study, novel, short stories, or original poetry compositions.

Guidelines for the Honors Thesis:

- An Honors thesis is the culmination of a student's undergraduate study and research in the field should be done in the student's final year.
- Work on the Honors thesis should be conducted over the course of a full year or more.

- Some aspects of the timeline are pre-determined and must be followed strictly by all students, including time when proposal due; time by which defense must be completed; time when entire thesis is due in Honors Program office.
- Faculty mentoring is critical. The Honors Program Assistant Director will be in contact with your advisor(s) to determine your progress-to-date.
- While the University Honors Program sets pre-determined requirements, the individual faculty mentor and student partner lay the groundwork for the direction of the research, meeting times, etc.

Senior Research Proposal

The Senior Thesis Proposal should consist of the following elements. Include each as a separate heading.

I.) The project topic, problem, or issue (in a descriptive paragraph)

II.) The significance of the topic. Detail how this research fits with what you have already studied in your major. Locate your research within your major (or minor) disciplinary's focus. Also consider what a reader of your research would learn.

III.) Methodology used to prepare your paper, perform your piece, implement your project, etc. What methods have you used to obtain your information? Have you conducted experiments, collated data from surveys, researched in scholarly texts, evaluated significant visual/written pieces in your field, etc.? You should consult frequently with your project mentor who will guide you in your research and your synthesis of material.

IV.) Annotated Bibliography or significant equivalent:

- Incorporate course work, scholarly literature (reputable secondary source material), viable primary source documentation, visual adaptations, models, etc. (Discuss bibliography or equivalent with your faculty mentor.)
- Submit a preliminary annotated bibliography or equivalent.

V.) The anticipated outcome of your project. Will it be a report or demonstration, a presentation, or a public performance?

- The Academic Showcase will enable you to present your research findings publicly.
- Will you be performing before an audience, either in your major or for the general public?
- Will you be delivering a paper at a scholarly conference?

VI.) Who will be guiding your research (your faculty advisor)? A letter is included in this packet that you will have to return to the Honors Office on or before December 1. (See below for additional information).

Note well: A signed contract/letter by you, your faculty mentor, and honors director/assistant director. This contract will authorize study under this faculty member and must be submitted by September 30. Any changes in this arrangement will need to be authorized by your mentor and the honors director/assistant director before proceeding. These changes must be approved in a timely fashion.

The Honors Council will receive a copy of the proposal and a list of those who have met this requirement. They will in turn be made aware of any student who does not meet this required piece.

Final Outcome

- Although some of your disciplines require a visual construction, performance, etc., you still must include a reflection and analysis of the process undertaken. You need to show evidence of systematic progression.
- The final copy of your thesis should conform to the format identified in the Senior Thesis Checklist and should include the appropriate cover page AND signature form.