



# **The HONORS College**

**The Thesis Handbook**

**2020-2021**



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## Introduction

The thesis process is an exciting time to delve deeply into the academic areas that interest you with the help of a knowledgeable professor. It can also be an intimidating, scary process. However, many honors students point to the thesis as one of the most fulfilling experiences of their undergraduate careers.

**The thesis serves as the culmination of your interests and academic studies and presents an opportunity for focused study within your major. Your thesis serves as a successful conclusion to your undergraduate studies by contributing to your field of study.**

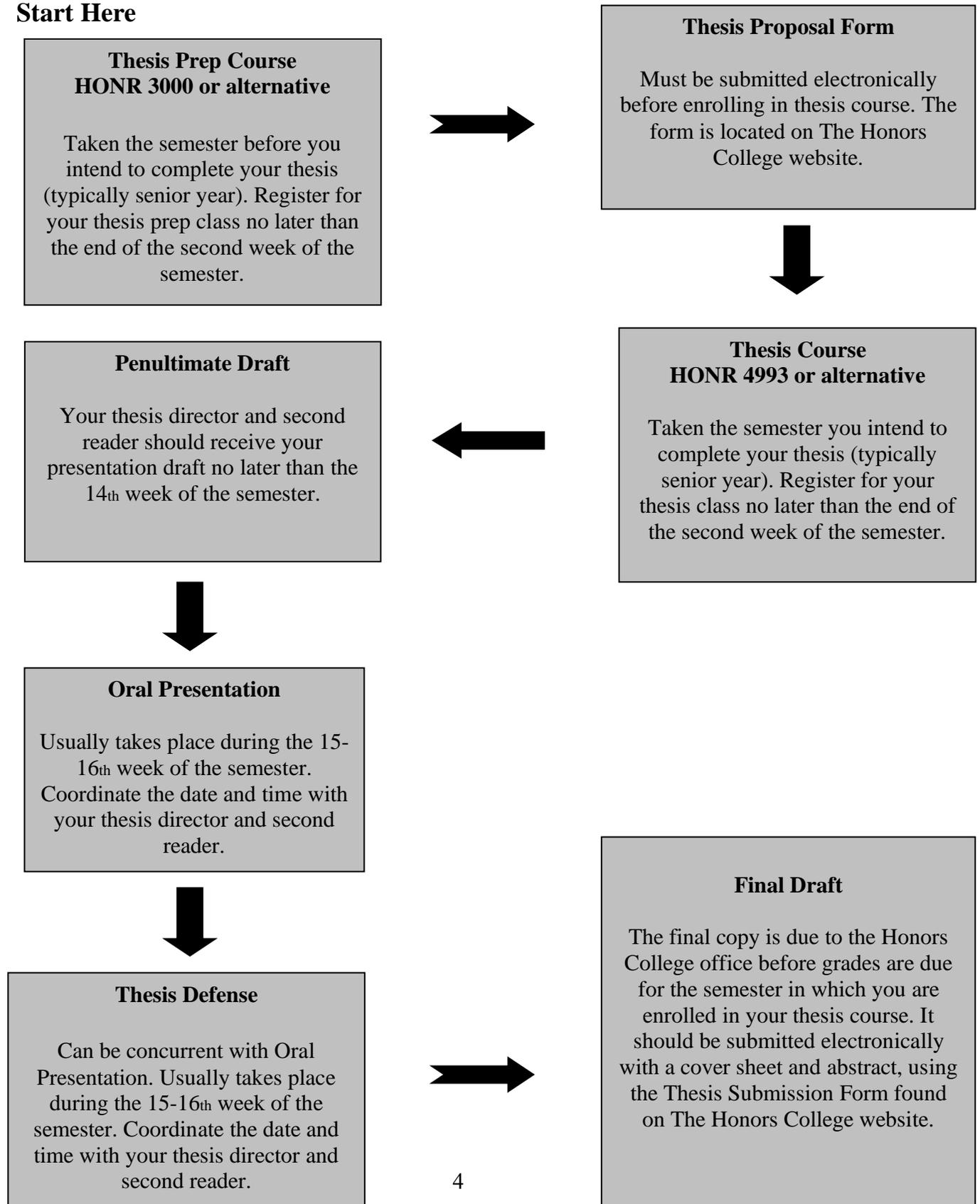
Professors cannot explore all of your interests during class meetings 2-3 times a week. Instead, your classes represent the professor's interest and knowledge on a subject given to students across a variety of majors. Your thesis is your chance to really explore something that fascinates you! It is not, however, just a really long research paper. For a thesis, you select the topic, you do most of the research independently, and you get to set the work schedule for your thesis. Along with honing your research and writing skills, the thesis process serves as a crash course in project management and independence. You will be taking your thesis from its inception as an idea through development and into a fully realized end product.

The commitment and skills learned through the thesis impress many graduate programs, professional schools, and prospective employers. Some graduate programs require a certain proficiency in research skills that are developed by undertaking the thesis process. Faculty members involved with a student's thesis often serve as excellent references for future education and employment.

And don't forget, a thesis is required for the Honors College Degree and the College/ Departmental Awards. The Policies & Procedures of The Honors College at Oklahoma State University (4-5) requires the application form for the Departmental or College Honors Award "shall contain a working title for the senior honors thesis, report, or creative component," and (4-8), states "[t]he deadline for filing the approved copy of the thesis, report, or other creative component shall be the last day on which grades may be reported for the semester or summer session."

## Common Honors Thesis Process

### Start Here



## Getting Started...Writing a Thesis can be Rewarding!

### ***What exactly is a thesis?***

*So, what counts as a Thesis?*

There are many ways to approach this capstone to your honors education. Most students research a topic of interest in their majors and develop an independent paper on that topic. Other students utilize the “Creative Component” option to fulfill their thesis requirement. For example, in the past, students have written or directed plays, written and performed musical works, and written creative works for publication. To access the most recent thesis projects done, contact the Honors College at [honors@okstate.edu](mailto:honors@okstate.edu) and include the field from which you’d like to reference.

The main focus should be on developing a thesis or project that represents **original scholarly or creative work**. The Honors College will provide you with the support you need, but we also recognize that many times professors and those working in your field of study will be in the best position to determine and evaluate your thesis topic and final project.

*Can I use my Thesis to complete requirements in my major?*

Yes, you are strongly encouraged to investigate linking your Honors thesis with major requirements such as a departmental thesis, design project, artistic project, research, and/or capstone. In some cases, a major requirement can be augmented to satisfy the requirements of the Honors thesis.

*Does my thesis topic have to be something in my major?*

No. Students often find their thesis topic touches on several disciplines including their majors. Occasionally, students find themselves fascinated by an aspect of study that is related to their major, but might be best advised by a thesis director in another discipline area. However, your last year at college is probably not the best time to master a new major. Carefully consider your reasons for choosing a topic that is outside your major and discuss the amount of background reading that will be required with your thesis director. Also remember that any thesis being used as a capstone requirement must be within your major. However, if you want to go outside your major for your thesis, you need to talk with your Honors Advisor before you start your thesis prep.

*What length is required for my thesis?*

There are no formal requirements as to length of the honors thesis. Additionally, The Honors College does not specify a thesis format. This is because length requirements and formats for the theses vary according to discipline. Your thesis director should be able to guide you in selecting the proper length and format for your field of study. The most important thing to remember is that your thesis represents a significant piece of independent research. Your thesis should be well written and should reflect the outcome of 6 hours of upper-division Honors credit.

*When do I need to start thinking about my Thesis?*

Thesis work is inspired by classes, research, and interests that arise during your previous undergraduate career. Your thesis is done over a two-semester time frame so you need to be thinking about it during second semester junior year at the latest. The earlier you begin to think about your thesis, the more time you will have to explore various research topics.

## ***Enrolling in the thesis prep class***

*I keep hearing about HONR 3000. What is this class?*

HONR 3000 is also called the **Advanced Honors Thesis Preparation**. It is required for all students. HONR 3000 is a three-hour thesis preparation course taken in the semester prior to undertaking the senior honors thesis or senior honors project. You may have a course within your department to use for your prep course, ask your Honors Advisor about this if you'd prefer this course.

The thesis preparation course is a three-hour independent study course. It is for you and the professor to decide on the structure of the course and the nature of your thesis preparation. For many students, the thesis preparation course will yield one or more papers specifying the thesis question, justifying the choice of topics, identifying hypotheses, and reviewing the existing literature.

*Who teaches HONR 3000?*

The professor who supervises the thesis preparation course should expect to serve as your thesis director. This means you need to have a general direction for your thesis topic, a mentor, and your second reader picked out a full semester before you plan to undertake your thesis!

*How do I enroll in HONR 3000?*

To enroll in HONR 3000, you should ask a faculty member in the department of your major to supervise you in a three-credit thesis preparation course. Once you have found your thesis director, let your Honors Advisor know. Your thesis director will then be emailed a form they'll file out to request an HONR 3000 course. Once the form is received, The Honors College office will create the course for you, then you will enroll in the course via the Banner Enrollment System. You must complete this process by the end of **Drop/Add Week** of your thesis prep semester.

## ***I'm ready to enroll in my Thesis Course.***

*Do I need to file anything with The Honors College before I begin?*

YES! The [Thesis Proposal Form](#) must be filed electronically with The Honors College office BEFORE you begin the semester in which you plan to write your senior honors thesis or undertake the senior creative component.

*What information is required on the Thesis Proposal Form?*

The Honors College at Oklahoma State University requires the award application form contain:

- (1) General student information, such as major, college, G.P.A, graduation date etc.
- (2) A working title for the senior honors thesis, along with a general description of your project.
- (3) The course prefix and section of your senior honors thesis course.
- (4) The names and campus contact information of two faculty members who will serve as your committee (CEAT students will simply list the name and campus contact information of the professor overseeing their Senior Design course).

If you are an Engineering student, you will fill out the [Thesis Proposal Form for CEAT Students Only](#). If you are planning to pursue the International Endorsement to the Honors College Degree, you must fill out a separate application, [The Application for the Honors International Certificate](#).

If you are unsure about anything on the form, please contact your honors advisor. We can help you fill out the form and answer any other questions you may have.

*How do I enroll in my thesis course?*

If you will be enrolling in HONR 4993, email your honors advisor letting them know you need an HONR 4993 course created along with the name of your thesis director. The Honors College will send a form link to your thesis director that they'll submit to officially request the course. The Honors College office will then create the HONR 4993 course for you, then you will enroll in the course via Banner.

If you will be enrolling in a course other than HONR 4993, your thesis director or your academic advisor in your college will be the best sources of information in enrolling in your thesis course. Honors theses may serve as projects for college requirements, especially college capstone courses. Many departments require a senior project course and offer an honors section of the class that can fulfill the thesis requirement. Talk to your honors advisor if you think this applies to your capstone.

*When does the class meet? It says TBA.*

No regular meeting times are scheduled for your thesis course. This is an independent study course and you will have several meetings throughout the semester with your thesis director. Of course, you are welcome to set up appointments with your Honors College Advisor as well to ask questions or get help.

## **Special Circumstances: CEAT, SSB, Capstones and Funded Research**

*I'm an Engineering student, how does the thesis work for me?*

Engineering students use their Senior Design Project (the one completed during the final semester for all CEAT majors but Architecture, who use their fourth-year studio for their honors thesis) for their honors thesis requirement. The professor of the course will serve as your thesis director, and you will follow all of the requirements of the course (including thesis defense and presentation requirements). You will still be expected to submit a final paper or project at the end of the semester, so be sure to work with your professor closely regarding what is needed for that particular paper/project. Also, be sure to check in with your honors advisor if you have any questions or concerns.

If you have a two semester for at least six hour or a one semester six-hour design project, it'll serve as both your thesis prep and thesis. If you do not, then you'll do a contract the semester before design in a major class to be substituted for your prep. If your two design courses don't total at least six hours, you will need to contract addition major courses to reach the overall of six needed.

*I'm a Business student, how does the thesis work for me?*

As a business student, you are only required to have one semester of independent study hours for your thesis. For your thesis prep, you must contract a major course from the approved list from Spears School of Business for courses eligible to fulfill your thesis prep requirement. To see the approved list, reference Appendix II.

*My major has a capstone course, can I use it for honors?*

Maybe. It depends on your major and if your department has given the approval for it to counts as your capstone AND your honors thesis. Ask your Honors Advisor if yours can be your thesis. If it can, then you'll contract an additional major course to fulfill your thesis prep and then use your capstone as your thesis. If your capstone has not been approved to count as your capstone AND your thesis, then you'll need to do your capstone AND separate thesis prep/thesis courses.

*Can I use my Wentz Project, Niblack Scholarship, Steele Scholarship, etc. for my thesis?*

Yes! In fact, many students use the opportunities provided by funded research to develop independent research that can also serve as a thesis. One project, with small alterations, may meet both the requirements for The Honors College and the scholarship in question. You MUST tell your Honors Advisor early and you should be enrolled in upper division research hours for an overall of six hours.

*What class do I enroll in for my Honors Thesis if I am also completing funded research?*

This is the perfect time to get to know your thesis director better. In general, your thesis director will have an understanding of the courses usually associated with your scholarship. A few specific scholarship opportunities are addressed below. If you have funded research not listed

here, or if you have other questions after speaking with your thesis director, please ASK your Honors Advisor. In most of these cases, a contract stating “thesis course” could be required!

**Niblack Scholars** - Take note – you usually only enroll in three overall hours for a Niblack, through a fall, spring, and summer enrollment in UNIV 2910 one-hour course. To satisfy the thesis requirement, you will need three more hours through department research numbers or through honors. Talk to your Honors Advisor for a plan to get the additional three hours.

**Wentz Research Projects** – The Wentz Project awards are fairly flexible. While all students chosen for an award must arrange with their professors to receive at least two hours of academic credit. If you have a Wentz Research Project, plan to enroll in a ~~three-hour~~ research course during both the fall and spring semester. Sample courses include HONR 4993, CHEM 4990, and BHON 4990, but every major has been upper-division course specifically for research hours. If you have problems locating it on Banner, ask your thesis director or honors advisor.

*I didn't realize I could use my funded research until too late. Now what?*

Use your funded research as a jumping off point for your Honors thesis. You will need to complete an additional research project, but you will be way ahead! You have already developed the background information, found contacts within the department, and perfected research methods.

## The Thesis Process: Inception to Final Product

### *Do I choose a thesis director or topic first?*

In all honestly, students pick either their topic or their director first in about equal proportions. To some extent, you should know which approach you are more comfortable with. If you have an idea as to your thesis topic, then you can choose a director with that area of study. If you have a favorite professor, but are less defined as to the topic, then ask them about thesis advising first.

### **How do I choose my director?**

#### *I know my topic, how do I pick my thesis director?*

If you have a thesis focus area in mind, then search the hallowed halls to find a thesis director who can complement your study. Realistically, this will take some research on your part – you don't really want to wander around your department aimlessly asking for a thesis director. Generally, students begin by searching the department's website for each faculty member's specialty areas. This is as easy as pulling up each professor's information and checking out their vita (the academy's word for resumé) for the areas in which they have studied and published. Take the time to have an informal chat with a couple of faculty members you have worked well with in the past. You may find one of them is a good candidate or they may be able to recommend a faculty member for whom your topic is better suited. It may take you a while to find the right thesis director, but don't be discouraged. You are learning about the breadth of your discipline and about each faculty member in the process. A few last words of encouragement – don't be afraid to knock on professors' doors; most of them do not bite.

#### **To be a faculty thesis adviser, he or she must:**

- 1.) Work at Oklahoma State University – Stillwater or Tulsa campus – as a regular full-time, regular part-time, tenure track academic faculty member (Assistant, Associate Professor, or Professor Emeritus)."
- 2.) Have attained a doctorate (Ph.D.) or the terminal degree in his or her field
- 3.) Be on campus during the semester in which you are completing your research (e.g., not on sabbatical leave)
- 4.) Faculty members from OSU – College of Veterinary Medicine and OSU – Center for Health Sciences are not eligible to oversee an honors thesis.

***Exceptions to these criteria must be approved by the academic department and The Honors College Dean.***

## Roles and Responsibilities

### Student Responsibilities

*What am I responsible for while I write my thesis?*

Well, beyond the obvious, **you agree to:**

- Turn in the required thesis forms on time and completed to the Honors College office;
- Organize and schedule an initial thesis meeting with your thesis director and second reader before the third week of your thesis semester;
- Attend and *be prepared* for regular meetings with your thesis director – if a meeting must be cancelled, provide plenty of notice. We recommend bi-weekly meetings;
- Secure, with the thesis director's assistance, any necessary special approval for the research;
- Keep all thesis members informed as to the progress of the thesis project;
- Inform your Honors College advisor – who will then inform the program coordinator and, if necessary, the Dean of The Honors College – if there are any concerns with the process or indications that the thesis project is not on track for completion;
- Present and defend your thesis; and
- Enjoy the Honors College Hooding Ceremony!

### Faculty Roles during the Thesis

*What exactly does my thesis director do?*

The most important aspect of your thesis will be to communicate with your prospective thesis director regarding your commitment to your thesis and their commitment to your thesis.

**Ultimately, you have the responsibility for researching, writing, and compiling a timely and scholarly thesis. The independence required for a thesis is part of what separates the thesis from all other undergraduate work.**

That said, **the thesis director agrees to:**

- Work with the student to refine the student's interests into a suitable thesis project;
- Provide a clear expectation for the thesis/project, which addresses benchmarks, length, assessment, and other aspects of scholarship particular to the particular discipline;
- Help identify an appropriate thesis second reader;
- Meet with the student and second reader to work together to establish appropriate deadlines for drafts;
- Be prepared to meet with the student regularly (at least biweekly; we encourage weekly meetings) throughout the thesis project;
- Inform the Dean of The Honors College if there appear to be indications that the thesis project is not on track for completion;
- Read and comment on drafts of the thesis as it develops;
- Chair the student's thesis defense;
- Grade the student in HONR 4993 or the equivalent; and
- Participate in the Hooding Ceremony at the end of the fall or spring semester, if possible.

### *What does my Second Reader do?*

Your second reader generally has a working knowledge of your thesis area. The second reader can provide balance to your thesis by giving you guidance and another perspective. The second reader is expected to meet with the student and thesis director to establish appropriate deadlines for drafts and other "milestones" in the thesis project. The Honors College expects the second reader to participate in the thesis presentation and defense, whatever form that takes.

Before you ask a faculty member to be your second reader, talk about your choice with your thesis director. Your second reader will need to electronically approve your Thesis Proposal Form before you begin your thesis.

### *What do I tell my second reader about their role in the thesis?*

For your thesis semester to run smoothly, it is best to let all the faculty members involved in your thesis know what your thesis area is, how the thesis process works, and what their role will be throughout the semester. Your **second reader agrees to:**

- Provide the student guidance and information on their thesis when appropriate;
- Be available to meet with the student periodically during the semester;
- Attend an initial meeting with the Thesis Director and the student to address expectations and deadlines;
- Read and comment on drafts of the thesis as they materialize;
- Participate in the student's defense of their thesis during the public presentation.

### *What if I am not getting along with my Thesis Director?*

Thankfully, this situation occurs only rarely; however, if you are not happy with the interaction between you and your thesis director there are a few steps you can take to change the circumstances. Sometimes, tension is created simply through a simple miscommunication. Make a point to talk to your thesis director **face to face** about your concerns. Context is often lost in email – what came across as a blasting critique might have started as a simple suggestion. If your thesis director seems to have disappeared now that you are knee deep in the process, figure out their office hours or catch them after a class to ensure you set up a time to meet that day, if possible, or later the same week.

### *Can I change my thesis director/second reader?*

Only if you really need to make a change, but make this a carefully considered move. Occasionally, a faculty mentor might be out of the office for an extended time due to illness, professional commitments, or something unforeseen. When this happens, discuss the situation with your director/second reader and ask for a recommendation of an appropriate replacement. Or as your thesis progresses, you might feel you the need for expertise in an area outside those of your director/second reader. You can ask for help informally, or you can rearrange your thesis director and second reader positions as necessary. If the decision is based on a conflict, see your Honors Advisor for suggestions on handling the situation.

For any major changes, you will need to submit a new Thesis Proposal Form with the updated information and have it approved by your thesis director, second reader, and College Honors Director.

## ***How do I select a topic?***

*I know which professor I would like to work with, but how do I pick my topic?*

Completing a thesis is a rigorous endeavor, so you want to select a topic that is intellectually exciting, challenging, and fun. The following are some helpful hints about finding and choosing a topic:

- If you have a professor in mind your next step is to talk with that particular professor about ideas for a topic. Keep an open mind and enjoy talking with scholars in your field until you find a professor with interesting thesis ideas. Feel free to look up the last paper or two they authored. It never hurts to make a good impression and the articles will give you an idea of the specific interests of the faculty member.
- You can start a “topics file” where you keep track of potential areas of interest. This can include course syllabi, seminar papers, news clippings, etc. Occasionally review your file to see if there are recurrent themes to your interests.
- For class paper assignments, choose topics that are potential thesis ideas and use them to explore the ideas further.
- Ask yourself the following questions: What courses have most engaged me? What am I most curious about? What do I enjoy? What academic interests am I most passionate about?
- Many students are engaged in undergraduate research and this may make the selection of an Honors thesis topic and adviser a clear choice.

*Is there anything special I should know as I begin my thesis?*

Most honors theses do not require special permissions. However, please be aware that if your thesis involves human subjects you will need clearance from the IRB. Additionally, if your thesis involves animal care or hazardous materials, you may need to secure additional clearance. You should discuss this with your thesis director who usually has experience in securing the proper form of authorization.

*I will be working with Human Research Participants and I think I need IRB clearance. Who do I contact?*

OSU’s Institutional Review Board must review all research projects involving human research participants before any research activities with humans may be started. In order to determine whether your research project qualifies as *research with human participants*, please consult your thesis director. If questions arise, you and/or your thesis director may contact the IRB Office in 218 Scott Hall or to visit their website (<https://research.okstate.edu/compliance/irb/index.html>) to schedule an appointment.

Information about IRB review and application forms can be found on the IRB webpage: <https://research.okstate.edu/compliance/irb/index.html>. It is important to note that OSU requires all researchers preparing studies with human research participants to complete an online training course in research ethics. Student researchers must also complete this requirement before IRB approval for any study can be obtained. More information about this requirement can be found at: <https://research.okstate.edu/compliance/irb/training-and-education.html>.

## ***Ideas for Thesis Prep and Sample Thesis Semester Timeline:***

Your thesis prep semester is usually a fluid semester that can look different for each student. However, there are a couple things you need to do during your thesis prep and some you should consider to get ahead.

During your prep, you need to finalize your topic and find your second reader. This plus your thesis director and an abstract will be required on your Thesis Proposal form you submit. Once you have your thesis director and second reader, you can discuss what expectations there will be for your thesis, especially in regards to topic, length, and formatting of your thesis.

To get ahead during your thesis prep, it is recommended to start background reading and submit any approvals, such as IRB, as early as possible. Doing this will allow for you to have a jump start on your thesis semester.

For your thesis semester, this is just a sample. Your thesis director can help you set a more definite schedule. However, this is one way to map out your semester and establish workable goals throughout the semester.

	<b>First 4 Weeks</b>	<b>Middle 6-7 Weeks</b>	<b>Next 3 Weeks</b>	<b>Last 2-3 Weeks</b>
<b>Reading/ Research</b>	Meet with Thesis Director ASAP!  Background Reading  Secure IRB clearance, if needed	Focused research and planning	Fill-in research  Identify potential weaknesses for defense	Research and address any questions brought up at the defense
<b>Writing</b>	Proposal and revised proposal  Develop Bibliography  Begin rough draft	First rough draft completed  Write and revise middle portions – run these multiple versions by your thesis director & 2 <sup>nd</sup> reader  Write and revise	Pre-defense draft  Edit/revise entire paper  Locate or reprint signature page for defense.	Thesis Presentation and Defense  Edit/revise entire paper  Electronically submit final draft and abstract via

		introduction and conclusion		Thesis Submission Form
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## **Writing your Thesis**

*I have my thesis topic. I have my thesis director and second reader. Now, how do I write a thesis?*

Well, truthfully, it's something you just sit down and write one page at a time. The most important thing you can do for yourself is to map out your thesis semester and keep to your schedule.

Keep in mind as you begin to map out your semester that you will need to give your thesis director several opportunities for input and revisions. In addition, you will want to schedule your defense a few weeks before the end of the semester to give yourself an opportunity to address questions that arise during your defense and make necessary revisions. No one writes a thesis in one draft.

**Please remember that this is a 3-hour course for credit. That means you should be spending around 10 hours a week on your thesis! This includes research, meeting with your thesis director, working with librarians, and writing among other things.**

## **The Fundamentals**

The written component of the thesis experience will incorporate the fundamentals of writing that you have learned in your Honors seminars. You need to pay particular attention to:

- organizing your writing for your particular audience;
- engaging in writing as a process which includes formal and informal writing, and writing multiple drafts that are reviewed and subsequently revised;
- utilizing the writing expertise you have learned while writing summaries, syntheses, evaluations, and arguments in your Honors seminars;
- strategizing for cohesion;
- editing and proofreading; and
- utilizing appropriate documentation styles.

*Who is my audience for my thesis?*

You will want to discuss this with your thesis director, obviously. If you are planning on using your research for submission to a technical journal, or if your thesis director has strong feelings about your audience, a higher level of knowledge may be necessary. But, in general, you are writing to a well-educated audience, but not an audience who are experts in your field. You will figure this out as you discuss your thesis with your director, second reader, and even friends - one more reason to give yourself plenty of time to revise your thesis as necessary.

### *OK, so how long does my thesis need to be?*

Once again, there are no formal requirements as to length of the honors thesis. What is important is that the thesis represents a significant piece of work that is well written and well presented. Again, keep in mind that this is the culmination of your undergraduate work and should represent the time and effort put into 6-hours of upper division courses.

If you are intimidated by the thought of writing a long paper, think of the short papers that have been required of you over a semester. A seminar course may require 5 five-page papers. So, writing a twenty-five- or thirty-page thesis should not be unmanageable. In fact, many students find writing on a topic of their choosing to be very engaging and have a hard time editing their papers down to a manageable level. Your thesis director will give you their expectations when you have your first meeting with them.

### **What Format should I use?**

Honors Theses vary from department and research discipline but all include a formal written component, a formal oral presentation, and an oral defense. Examples of theses can be found in the Honors College Office. Students have used the following formats in the past:

- Research paper - This is a paper including first-hand data from experiments and surveys. It may include laboratory, fieldwork, surveys, or scholarly research.
- Scholarly paper - A paper that uses original and secondary published sources to formulate a question and make a creative contribution to the literature. The paper may be a review and synthesis of the literature or an original paper (some students have published their work).
- Business plan – The student conceptualizes a business, including a plan for marketing, finance, and implementation. Students who are interested in business and entrepreneurship find this format very appealing.
- Portfolio –A formal compilation of a student’s artistry created as part of their fine arts thesis.
- Education unit – Primarily for students who are student teaching as part of their education certification. Students create an educational “unit” that includes lesson plans, instructions, and pedagogy.
- Fine arts display or performance - Presentation of a student’s creative artistry (e.g., dance, music, and vocal recitals; art, film, theatrical performance, and photography exhibits).
- Design project – Some students complete a senior design project. Groups of students work together to complete projects that are used to fulfill the Honors thesis requirement.

## Thesis Components

The Honors College does not specify a thesis format, but in general, theses have a few components in common.

- Title Page
- Abstract (required)
- Table of Contents (if appropriate)
- List of graphic evidence – tables, figures, etc. (if any)
- Text
- Endnotes (if appropriate)
- Bibliography/References
- Appendices (if any)
- IRB or other authorization (if required)
- Author Biography (for fun and totally optional)

### *What do I turn in to The Honors College for a Creative Component?*

Completion of a creative component requires electronically submitting the Thesis Submission Form, the one-page abstract, and a representation of your thesis. The following are examples of creative components and the representation submitted to the Honors College:

writing/performing music – turn in the score and/or a DVD of your performance; documentary – turn in a completed DVD; senior design project – generally a written report including appendices. Other examples of creative components are a block of lesson plans, a book about travel experiences, public information pamphlets on developmental issues, fully planned fictional event. If you are unable to submit your creative component online due to file size and/or type, please bring a copy of it to The Honors College Office, 101 Old Central.

## Campus Resources

*Is there anything on campus that will make my life easier during my thesis semester?*

In future semesters, The Honors College will hold Thesis Information sessions to provide more guidance and information regarding the thesis process and provide support from your fellow Honors College students, particularly those also writing their thesis, your thesis director, and second reader. This handbook is also a great source of information and guidance. Of course, the Honors College staff is always available to help in any way we can. Here are some good perks of being an Honors College student and other resources available on campus that will help during your thesis semester –

- **Honors College**
  - **Forms.** All the required thesis forms are available online. You can find a copy of the forms by going to <https://honors.okstate.edu/honors-college-forms.html> and looking under Thesis Forms.
  - **Thesis Master List.** The Honors College keeps a master list of all these completed within the college since the early 1990s. The list is arranged by

department allowing you to easily find the types of theses that have been completed in your area of interest.

- **Thesis Files.** In addition to the master list, The Honors College also has full copies of the theses listed. Many students find looking at theses that have been completed in their areas an invaluable resource for ideas and insight on the thesis process. If you'd like to view a thesis, contact The Honors College for more information about these files.

- **Library**

- **Check out privileges.** All of our Honors College students have extended library privileges at Edmon Low Library. This is something you may have heard about since you joined The Honors College, but haven't really taken advantage of. During your thesis semester, you will come to appreciate the fact that you can basically check most books out for the entire semester.
- **Interlibrary Loan.** This is a service that is available to all patrons of Edmon Low Library. Interlibrary Loan systems allow you to borrow books that may not be housed within OSU's library system.
- **Subject Librarians.** Most subjects taught at OSU will have a subject librarian who is an invaluable resource to thesis students. Subject Area librarians will let you know the extent of the library's collection in your area and can help you find resources. Contact your subject librarian by phone or email by visiting <http://www.library.okstate.edu/research-guides/subject-lists/>.

- **OSU Writing Center**

- **One-on-one Conferences.** The OSU Writing Center is located in 440 Student Union and offers one-on-one consultations with a writing consultant. Please note that these appointments are only 50 minutes long. This means the consultant will be able to discuss the overall format, a general outline, and a small section of your writing. They do not serve as your personal editor and would be unlikely to help you with revising your entire final product. That said, it is especially helpful during the thesis process to have someone outside your project read and give you ideas for improvement. Appointments can be made by calling (405)744-6671.
- **Writing Center Drop-In Locations.** There are other locations across campus that offer the same services as the OSU Writing Center. They are located in buildings such as Edmon Low Library, Ag Hall, and Stout Hall. To view where and when each location is open, please visit <https://osuwritingcenter.okstate.edu/>.

## **Penultimate Draft**

Students submit the penultimate (next to the last) draft of their thesis to their thesis director and second reader before the scheduled presentation and defense (**around week 14 or when requested by the thesis director**). Your director and second reader should have time to review it prior to the presentation. The thesis director and reader will comment and give feedback to you after the thesis presentation. You can incorporate changes (if any) into the final thesis copy.

## ***Thesis Presentation/Defense***

### *What is required at my thesis presentation and defense?*

Generally, these can be held at the same time. You might be allotted 10-15 minutes to present a summary of your thesis, report, or creative component in front of your thesis director and second reader, plus anyone else you invite such as Honors College staff, other professors and interested students. After your “presentation,” the audience will have an opportunity to ask questions about your thesis project. You will ‘defend’ your research by showing how your methods, research, and findings adequately address their questions.

### *How do I schedule my thesis defense?*

Talk with your thesis director and second reader to find a date and time for your thesis defense. Your department may hold its own presentation day, or you may need to schedule the room yourself. For example, The College of Business usually holds a thesis colloquium near the end of each semester. Your College Honors Director will notify you and your thesis director of the time and place of any such presentation opportunities. If possible, schedule your defense before finals week. This is to give you time to make any revisions you feel necessary after your defense. Please note that you are responsible for scheduling your defense.

It is important that you try to get your defense scheduled as early in the semester as possible! Faculty calendars generally fill up and become more difficult to coordinate as the semester wears on, so try to make your life easier by scheduling when their calendars are at their lightest. This is especially true in the spring semester when faculty have professional commitments, such as conferences to attend.

Tell your Honors College advisor and the Dean of the Honors College of the time, date, and place of the defense at least a week before your defense. We know you have been working hard and would love to come learn more about your research!

### *Is there anything different about a creative component defense?*

You and your thesis director should decide upon the mechanics for the defense portion of the creative component. CEAT students may present and defend their thesis in a “jury” format. Other creative components may have a public presentation (such as a reception or performance) and choose to conduct the defense at a different time. In any event, you must defend your thesis/creative component before your thesis director and second reader before submission of the final paperwork to The Honors College.

### *How can I prepare for my defense?*

One of the best ways to get ready is to do a trial run! Schedule an informal time and place with your friends and family and present your findings to them. This will give you a sense of timing for your thesis presentation and build your confidence.

Another idea is to think about which of your professors was the most effective at communicating information in your classes. You might try to emulate this professor and even ask if you can sit down and talk with them to get tips for presentation. I guarantee they will be flattered!

### *What else needs to be done before the defense?*

Your most important task is to provide a final, thoroughly edited version your thesis director and your second reader, if possible at least a week before your thesis defense. You should also confirm that any equipment (overhead or computer projectors, screens, computers) that you need are available for the defense.

### *Can I invite other people to the defense?*

Yes. If you wish to have friends or family attend your defense, you are welcome to do so. As with any public presentation, think about how observers affect the experiment and what sensitivity, if any, they may have to your presentation. You may also want to talk this over with your thesis director.

### *I'm excited, but anxious. What happens at the defense?*

A thesis defense is designed to last approximately 30-45 minutes. Typically, the first 15 minutes is devoted to your thesis work. Usually you will be asked to present a summary of your thesis, after which your thesis director, second reader, and the audience will engage you in a question and answer session. During this discussion, as well as after the defense, suggestions for revisions may be made. The presentation is sometimes done simply as a "talk," but it may also involve a computer (PowerPoint) presentation or some other form. This is something you should talk over with your thesis director.

### *What are "tips" for a successful defense?*

A few questions to think about:

- Do you want your advisor to introduce you?
- Do you want to take questions during your presentation or wait until it's over? (Don't forget to tell your audience what you have decided!)
- Many students use PowerPoint to present their thesis. It's not a requirement, but you might want to consider it.
- Regardless of what method you choose for presentation, practice! In many cases, your advisor would be glad to sit down with you and listen to your presentation, providing some suggestions. You might also try it out on friends and fellow thesis-writers.
- Think about how you will be most comfortable in the thesis defense.

## **Revisions and Final Submission**

*What is this about revisions? I'm not done?*

Done? A thesis is never done! Just kidding, but in almost every thesis some amount of revisions work before submitting the final version is required. In the vast majority of cases, this is nothing more than minor, word processing changes. In a very small number of situations, it might entail more serious changes and revisions.

*How long do I have to get my final revisions in? When is submission deadline?*

After making the revisions, if any, after your thesis defense, submit a copy (paper or electronic – ask your advisor!) of your post-defense thesis to your advisor and second reader. Once they approve your thesis, it's time to file it with The Honors College.

Submit your thesis using the Thesis Submission Form (CEAT students use the form found at <https://honorsokstate.wufoo.com/forms/honors-thesis-submission-form-ceat-only/>; all other students use the form found at <https://honorsokstate.wufoo.com/forms/honors-thesis-submission-form/>). Once you complete the form and upload your thesis, your thesis director, second reader, and Honors College Director will receive emails requesting their approval of your thesis.

Once your thesis is fully approved, the Dean of the Honors College will transmit the information to the Registrar where the appropriate Honors award will be recorded on your diploma and transcript. Since the Honors College must submit this information before student records are finalized for graduation degree materials, you must submit your thesis by the Monday after Finals Week for the fall or spring semester, or the Monday after completion of the final summer session. If you have any questions about when this date is, talk to your Honors College Advisor.

*What do I turn in to The Honors College for a Creative Component?*

Completion of a creative component requires turning in the Thesis Submission Form, the one-page abstract, and a representation of your thesis. The following are examples of creative components and the representation submitted to the Honors College: writing or performing music – turn in the score and/or a DVD of your performance; documentary – turn in a completed DVD; senior design project – generally a written report including appendices. Other examples of creative components are a block of lesson plans, a book about travel experiences, public information pamphlets on developmental issues, fully planned fictional event. If you are unable to submit your creative component online due to file type and/or size, please bring a copy of it to The Honors College Office, 101 Old Central.

On the Home Stretch...

## **What, exactly, do I need turn in to The Honors College at the end of the semester?**

You MUST turn in a copy of your thesis, report, or other creative component, a one-page abstract, and the Thesis Submission Form. All honors theses (through 2014) are on file in the Special Collections Department in the Edmon Low Library and are open to students. Theses from 2015 to present, as well as an index of all theses, are available in The Honors College office, 101 Old Central.

### *What is the Thesis Submission Form?*

In addition to the text, the thesis copy filed with The Honors College must include a Thesis Submission Form, which contains:

- (1) General student information, such as major, college, G.P.A, graduation date etc.
- (2) Thesis title and a place to record your abstract (you will still need to include the actual abstract with your thesis).
- (3) The dates of the successful completion of your presentation and defense
- (4) The thesis file.
- (5) Names and campus contact information of the two faculty members who served on your thesis committee (CEAT students will simply list the professor of their Senior Design Course).

### *What is an abstract?*

An abstract is a one-page summary of your thesis addressing the scope, methods, purpose, and results of your thesis. You MUST include a one-page abstract with your thesis.

### *Where are these forms located? Can I find examples?*

You can find the forms online at the Honors College Website (<https://honors.okstate.edu/honors-college-forms.html>). If you have any questions about filling out the forms or gaining the proper signatures, talk to your honors advisor.

## **What about my grade?**

Your thesis director assigns letter grades for your thesis course.

# **And you're DONE!!!**

You have just completed the Honors College Thesis Handbook! We hope this information will make your thesis semester manageable and productive. Your thesis is your chance to really explore your interests and make a contribution to your academic field. We know you will write a wonderful thesis. YOU CAN DO IT!!

# Appendix I

## ***Thesis Checklist***

### **SEMESTER I (SEMESTER BEFORE THESIS WORK UNDERTAKEN)**

_____ Secure Honors Thesis Director	Before Semester Begins
_____ Enroll in Thesis Preparation Course (Department Course or HONR 3000)	Before Add/Drop Deadline
_____ Secure Honors Thesis Second Reader	Before Semester Ends
_____ Thesis Preparation Course Completed	Last day of classes
_____ Submit Thesis Proposal Form (Requires information concerning your work within The Honors College, the working title of your thesis, and the electronic signatures of your Thesis Director, Second Reader, and Honors College Director. Some majors may require an additional departmental approval. International endorsement candidates must complete a separate application.)	Semester End

### **SEMESTER II (SEMESTER OF THESIS WORK)**

_____ Enroll in Thesis Course (Some departments allow students to undertake their thesis work as part of a capstone requirement for the department. All other majors enroll in Department Course or HONR 4993.)	Before Add/Drop Deadline
_____ Hold Expectations Meeting (Thesis Director, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Reader)	Week 3
_____ Schedule Honors Thesis Oral Defense	2 to 3 weeks before defense
_____ Distribute Penultimate Draft to thesis director and second reader	At least one week before defense
_____ Honors Thesis Oral Defense	Usually Week 14-15
_____ Submit Post-Defense Thesis (One copy should be submitted to thesis director and one copy to The Honors College by using the online submission form. CEAT students use the CEAT only form)	Before semester end

## Appendix II

### ***Courses to Contract as Thesis Prep for Spears School of Business***

#### **School of Accounting:**

- ACCT 3113 – Intermediate Accounting II or
- ACCT 3203 – Cost Accounting or
- ACCT 3603 – Accounting Information Systems or
- ACCT 4033 – Advanced Federal Income Taxation or
- ACCT 4133 – Advanced Accounting or
- ACCT 4503 – Auditing and Assurance Services or
- ACCT 4553 – Ethical Issues in Accounting

*Note: The School of Accounting uses an honors contract in an upper level accounting course to fulfill the thesis prep requirement. The contract will help students develop a preliminary thesis proposal that they could then work with in the subsequent semester for their thesis. Additionally, the contract would require students to participate in workshop sessions in the pre-thesis semester to discuss using the library, writing center, developing their question, etc. Given that we are using an honors contract, the specific upper level accounting course may vary.*

#### **Department of Economics:**

- ECON 4213 – Econometric Methods or
- ECON 4223 – Business and Economic Forecasting or equivalent

#### **School of Entrepreneurship:**

- EEE 4010 – Entrepreneurial Value Creation in Society

#### **Department of Finance:**

- FIN 4003 – Energy Business or
- FIN 4363 – Energy Finance or
- FIN 4763 – Financial Futures and Options or
- FIN 4813 – Portfolio Management
- FIN 4833 – Student Managed Investment Fund

#### **School of Hospitality and Tourism Management:**

- HTM 3213 – Hospitality and Tourism Management and Organizations
- HTM 3543 – Lodging Property Management
- HTM 4163 – Hospitality and Tourism Marketing and Sales

#### **Department of Management:**

- MGMT 3123 – Managing Behavior and Organizations or
- MGMT 4513 – Strategic Management or
- MGMT 4543 – Human Resource Analytics

#### **Department of Management Science and Information Systems:**

- MSIS 4263 – Decision Support and Business Intelligence Applications

#### **School of Marketing and International Business:**

- MKTG 4333 – Marketing Research