The Senior Honors Thesis
(HONR 499)

The Official Guide

What you need to know and do to plan, carry out, format and submit your Honors 499 thesis
Honors 499: The Honors Thesis

What is it and how do I complete it?

This guide will help you conceive, plan, carry out, and submit a successful Honors thesis, the final leg of your Honors College journey. This guide is divided into four parts:

1. How to plan and prepare your thesis topic and proposal.
2. How to carry out your thesis project once it is approved.
3. How to submit the thesis (formatting and other formal rules)
4. An appendix of required forms you will need

And along the way we’ll have some advice, helpful hints, and resources for you to make this a rewarding and successful experience. The key is to plan well and stay on top of things, which this guide will help you do. Read this very carefully!

Before we get started, though, what exactly is an Honors thesis?

The Honors thesis is your capstone Honors experience, an opportunity to craft a project that showcases the kinds of mature, educated, and developed critical thinking that is the hallmark of the Honors educational experience. It should reflect your best thinking and work after several years of university work. Some students produce traditional written research papers; others produce creative projects. The latter typically include projects in the fine arts (a series of paintings, a collection of short stories, a novel, a play, a choreographed dance, a musical composition or performance, etc.), but can also include creations that don’t lend themselves to a written research paper (a computer program, an app, a technological creation, an invention, etc.). In either case, what is presented as the thesis shows this advanced thinking, whether the end product is a written work or a creative project. Also, regardless of whether you do a traditional written thesis or a creative project, you will write an accompanying process analysis statement in which you reflect on your thesis process, any great obstacles or epiphanies you encountered, and your sense of the quality and meaning of your work. (More on that later.)

At its heart the thesis is an investigation into a question, theme, problem, or issue and the presentation of your answer(s) or response. The process and product of those investigations vary, as they should. For many students, what they pursue and how they pursue it is tied to their majors, though this doesn’t have to be the case. History majors often do historical research projects and write traditional research papers. Biology majors often carry out experiments in the lab or field. Theater majors often write plays or design sets. Art majors make art. You get the idea. In essence, for cases like these, you’re using the thinking skills you’ve developed in your Honors courses to further your work in your major. It can also be useful to think ahead to your post-BSU life. If you’re planning to do biological research work in graduate school, it can make sense to do a really good scientific experiment to show future grad schools you know what you’re doing.

That said, it also perfectly fine if you just want to investigate something you’re into. Find an advisor, get the topic approved (more on those things later!) and go for it! Either way, you’ll be using those thinking skills to explore something you love. If you don’t love your topic, get a new one. Life’s too short to work on boring projects. Bring some passion to it and you’ll do your best work! You might even have some fun.
The Honors thesis is not a regular course with regular meeting times but it is a real course. It's similar to an independent study with the course designation HONR 499, for which you earn three credit hours. You register for these credits during the appropriate semester for you (usually during your senior year). You should consider the workload equivalent to taking a regular 3-credit-hour course, with hours of work each week devoted to your thesis, just as if you were in a regular class that meets several times per week. It can be difficult to remember this (more on how to do so later!). You'll meet with your advisor on a regular basis, and when the project is completed, your advisor will evaluate your work and submit a final letter grade for you, just as he or she would for a regular course.

Here are the basic steps in completing an Honors thesis:

1. Do some thinking and preliminary research into a possible topic or project.
2. Make an appointment with the Dean, the Associate Dean, the Honors Fellow, or their designated representative in order to discuss your project. Your proposal must be approved by one of these individuals. This can happen before or after step 3 below.
3. Find a project advisor. Complete a thesis proposal and the proposal coversheet.
4. After you receive approval you'll be given permission to enroll in Honors 499 (or a department equivalent).
5. Complete the project, format it correctly, turn it in, and ring the bell of honor.

Those are the basic steps, so now let’s get down to the real nitty-gritty:
Part 1: How to Plan and Prepare Your Thesis Topic and Proposal

Coming up with an idea:

Honors theses are typically conducted during your senior year—fall or spring semester, it doesn’t matter. If you think you might need two semesters to get this done, it’s best to enroll in the fall if you’re graduating in the spring. Either way, your junior year is the time to begin thinking of a topic and looking for an advisor. Remember that because HONR 499 earns 3-credit hours it is part of your course load just like any other credit-earning course. Keep this in mind as you probably don’t want to have those credits push you into an overload situation (where you are registered for more than 18 credit hours) because that may have financial and workload implications. Consider this when planning your senior year courses.

It’s never too soon to start thinking of a possible topic. You may already have a well-thought out project idea you’ve been kicking around for some time. If so, great. But if not, here are some suggestions:

• When were you most intellectually excited during your college career? What were you doing when that moment hit? Why was your brain lit up? What topic or idea or process were you engaged with at that moment? Why do you think it was so exciting for you?
• What is a key idea or issue from your major or minor field that you’d like to investigate further? Maybe it’s something you heard about in a class or in a conversation with a professor from that department or program. If you finished a favorite course feeling that you would have liked more time for a particular aspect of that course, you may be able to turn that feeling into an idea for a topic.
• Was there an idea or issue from one of your Honors courses that really caught your attention?
• If you don’t want to work on a topic from your major or minor, is there an extracurricular activity or something else you are passionate about that you might want to investigate further?
• If you are planning to study abroad or do an internship, perhaps there’s a connection there to a thesis topic.
• Think first in terms of questions rather than fully-formed projects. While you may have the whole thing in mind, it can be daunting to try to figure out the entire process up front. Thinking about the questions that drive you, and/or the processes in which you like to investigate and interact with the world, can be more fruitful at this stage. Working with the Honors College staff and your major professor, you can later figure out how best to engage that question.
• It’s also very helpful to talk to your favorite professors, both in the Honors College and in your major field or elsewhere. They can help you brainstorm ideas, connect you to other helpful people and resources, and they may even have a project going to which you can contribute.
• Be on the lookout for announcements about any Honors College thesis events. Sometimes the Student Honors Council organizes workshops on theses.
• There are some examples of previous Honors theses later in this guide. While hardly exhaustive, they’ll give you a sense of the range of topics.
• Browse the online Honors thesis archive (cardinalscholar.bsu.edu/handle/123456789/14) or Wall of Pride in the Honors House for other examples.
• Think about your post-BSU plans. Can your thesis be of service to you in preparing for your next academic, professional, or personal step in life? If you are off to graduate school, can your thesis project help you gain admission, earn an assistantship, or prepare you for other opportunities there?
• If you are applying for a post-baccalaureate national or international scholarship, can your thesis project tie into that or otherwise prepare you for that experience? If so, this is a good question to address to Dr. Barb Stedman, our Director of National and International Scholarships.
• If you are heading into the job market, might your thesis show a potential employer what you can do in a way specific to your intended career?
• In sum, think about your future plans and see if your thesis can help you there as well. That way, the thesis serves as both capstone to your undergraduate career and a bridge to your future life.

Some related questions about choosing a topic:

• Is it “legal” to rework an old paper or project?

A thesis that builds on work already done can be a fine piece of work. A paper or presentation that analyzes internship experiences, a presentation based on some aspect of work or study abroad, an article developed from your research, a video for classroom use that grew out of practice teaching—these kinds of projects represent legitimate development of work already undertaken into new and more complex forms.

In contrast, a student who proposes to add a different introduction or a longer conclusion or a few more examples or illustrations to an already existing paper is not proposing anything that could be called an Honors capstone project. Your thesis advisor is required to confirm that your project is original and of Honors caliber.

• Can you collaborate with another student?

Certainly, but you need to get permission during your thesis meeting, which both you and your collaborator should attend together. Most collaborative projects are advised by the same mentor, but it’s possible to have different mentors. You should each turn in a separate thesis proposal, even if the information on them is essentially the same; remember to indicate the name of your collaborator. When you submit your theses, be sure to spell out, in your separate process statements, your individual roles in the project and in its design. The finished thesis, being the work of two people, should be double the work; it must not be equivalent to a single-author thesis. Per the library’s request, each person submits a separate copy of the thesis. They will be identical except for a few parts: each student will have a unique process analysis essay, unique acknowledgments, and the title page will differ slightly as the submitting student will have their name on top of their collaborator’s. Everything else is identical. Any variations should be discussed with your advisor.

• Will HONR 499 count toward my major or minor?
Credit for HONR 499 may apply toward fulfilling requirements for the major, minor, or for elective departmental credit. You should not assume that such credit will be given, however. Be sure to get the approval of the chairperson of the department involved. (See also next question.)

- What if a thesis or project is already required in my major?

  Departmental requirements within your major may sometimes call for a thesis or project comparable to what the Honors College expects from its students. In that case, you do not have to sign up for both your departmental capstone course and HONR 499; your departmental thesis credit may be substituted for HONR 499 or vice versa. Students in Architecture, Art, Landscape Architecture, Music, Psychology, and many others often sign up for a departmental course rather than HONR 499. You must gain permission for this substitution during your Honors thesis meeting, and in the case of a departmental substitution you must indicate the course number on your Honors thesis proposal. If you plan, for example, to use LA 404 or MUMET 495 or ART 490 as your capstone project number, the Honors College will process a DegreeWorks exception so that LA 404 or MUMET 495 or ART 490 “counts as” HONR 499; the DegreeWorks exception will be processed only after the signed, approved thesis is submitted.

  If, on the other hand, your department allows or even prefers that the capstone project course be recorded as HONR 499 (for example, HONR 499 can replace EDEL 450), then your department advisor may have to process a DegreeWorks exception for you.

- What if I am in Departmental Honors?

  Students not in the Honors College who are completing Departmental Honors register for HONR 499N. Honors College students who are also completing Departmental Honors do not need to do two theses, unless they wish to do completely separate projects, but should simply register for HONR 499, which counts for both Departmental Honors and the Honors College Senior Thesis. Note that HONR 499, not HONR 499N, should be noted on your Departmental Honors registration card if you are in the Honors College. Please note that if you are submitting your completed thesis in the same semester that you will graduate, all completed Departmental Honors requirements must be documented with the Honors College by October 31 (December Commencement) or March 17 (May Commencement).

Finding an advisor:

Every thesis needs a faculty advisor. Your faculty advisor will work with you to craft your best thesis project, evaluate your thesis, and assign a course grade for HONR 499 when it is completed. Thesis advisors can be one of your Honors professors, but they don’t have to be. In fact, most students choose advisors from their major departments, professors who already know them and who, ideally, have some expertise in the thesis subject area. When you have your Honors College thesis appointment, you can discuss possible advisors at that time if you haven’t yet found one.

It’s best to approach a potential advisor as early as possible. Faculty really dislike being asked at the last minute to advise a thesis. It’s best to ask early so that the two of you can plan your thesis and arrange the best semester in which to enroll in HONR 499. Here are some tips for approaching a potential faculty advisor:
• Start identifying potential advisors and approaching them early in the semester before the semester in which you need to take HONR 499 at the latest. So that means for a fall thesis, you should be talking to people in January of that year. For a spring thesis, that means late August/early September.

• Make an appointment rather than just dropping in. If you don’t know the professor’s office hours, call the department office (or the Honors College if it’s an Honors professor) to find out.

• It helps if the professor already knows you from a previous class. If they don’t, they’ll wonder why you are asking them to do this work.

• Be up front about why you are there. If you know your topic, be able to articulate it and why you think they’d be perfect as an advisor on that project.

• If you don’t know your topic but think they might be helpful in finding one, let them know you are there to discuss possible ideas and explain why you think they might be helpful.

• NEVER say to a potential faculty advisor, “You’re my last resort,” “I can’t think of anyone good to work with,” or “If I don’t get a thesis advisor today I won’t graduate on time.” Similarly, any kind of negative attitude about the thesis (“I don’t really want to do this project”) creates an immediate disincentive for that person to work with you.

• DO say how excited you are to be working on this project, what you think you’ll get out of it, etc. Smiling never hurts.

• When they agree to advise you on your project, thank them and say you are looking forward to working with them.

• Let them know that this Honors Thesis Guide is available on our website.

• But if they say no, thank them for their time and ask if they have any recommendations of someone else who might be a good fit for you. Faculty say no for all kinds of legitimate reasons: they may already be overburdened, they may already be advising one or more theses, they may not be available during the semester you need to work on your thesis, or they may not think they’re a good fit for your topic. They’ll almost certainly tell you why they can’t work with you. Don’t take a no answer personally. This is why you’ve started early, so now you still have time to approach someone else.

Some frequently asked questions about advisors:

• Can you have more than one advisor? Yes, you can, but you’ll need to designate one as the “first” advisor. She or he will be the one assigned to the course and will award your grade.

• Can you change advisors? Remember that once you have signed up for HONR 499 and informed the Honors College of who your advisor will be, that is the person who will award your grade for the course. If an emergency arises and you must change advisors, you should talk with the Dean, Associate Dean, Honors Fellow or designee first, after which you must submit a signed Change of Advisor form to the Honors College. If such a change is necessary, it must be completed by the midpoint of the semester in which you are enrolled in HONR 499, so that the grade sheet will be sent to the correct advisor.

• Can the product of an Undergraduate Honors Fellowship be used as a thesis? The work supported by an Undergraduate Honors Fellowship can be used to develop a subsequent Honors Thesis, but the Honors Thesis cannot be an immediate, direct product of an Undergraduate Honors Fellowship.
The Honors thesis meeting

Early in the process you will need to have your thesis topic approved by the Honors College. When you are ready to discuss your thesis project, call the Honors College at 765-285-1024 and tell the staff you wish to make a thesis appointment. They'll schedule a meeting for you with the Dean, the Associate Dean, the Honors Fellow, or their designated representative.

As with the meeting with a potential advisor, you need to be ready for this meeting. That means doing some thinking and planning. Ideally, this is a meeting to approve a thesis plan so you can get going and get registered for HONR 499. When you arrive for your meeting, make sure you have the following things with you:

- A solid idea with evidence of a solid foundation. That means you’ve done some basic research into the topic. You have a clear idea of what you want to do and why, and you have some sense of where your work fits into its field.
- A clear trajectory and plan for how you will execute and complete the project.
- And in general, show that you’ve already done this planning and thinking. Don’t arrive with simply the germ of an idea or a vague notion of something you might do. Show you are on top of things.

That said, if you’ve done this thinking and still don’t know what you want to do for your thesis, go ahead and schedule a thesis meeting. We’ll do our best to help you generate an idea. You won’t leave this meeting with a formal thesis approval, but assuming you’re walking out with an idea, after you’ve followed up on the idea you can submit a formal thesis proposal from (with the advisor’s signature). If accepted, that signed proposal will count as your formal thesis meeting and you won’t have to schedule a follow-up appointment unless you want to do so.

The two major types of Honors theses: research and creative

The range of topics and projects undertaken by Honors thesis students is vast. But in general they fall into two main categories: research theses and creative theses. What’s the difference?

Research theses:

In general, a research thesis is probably what you first think of when you think of a thesis. It's a written paper that explains the results of a research project. Page lengths can vary, but many in the humanities or social sciences are in the 35-page ballpark or greater. In contrast, a thesis that’s built on hundreds of hours of lab work may be only 15 pages. Your advisor will advise you on this issue.

Creative theses:

While thesis projects resulting in a written paper are of course creative, this category refers to projects for which the end product is something other than a written paper. This category typically includes projects from the visual arts (painting, sculpture, etc.), the performing arts (music, theater, dance), and from media arts (telecommunications, filmmaking, etc.). That’s just small sampling, however. Works of computer science, applied technology, fashion design, and even woodworking would apply here. It’s a pretty vast category. The key thing is the character of the end product. That character is expressed in something other than a research paper. That said, creative projects must be built on a solid intellectual foundation and that requires research as well. So, all thesis projects are
research-based. It’s the character of that research’s expression in the final product which determines whether it is a research or creative thesis.

The Process Analysis Essay:

Whether you are doing a research or creative project, you must write a process statement. This could also be called a meta-analysis. What that means is that you are reflecting critically on the process of carrying out your thesis project. The product (the written research paper or the creative product) contains the results of your process. For example, a ceramic coffee mug or an urban plan requires a lot of knowledge to produce, but how it was produced (the design thinking, technical issues, etc.) is not necessarily evident from simply looking at the mug or the plan. So a process analysis provides discussion of the information for why the mug or plan or whatever is a significant application of academic knowledge and judgment. Your process analysis reflects on how you carried it out. Discuss the research you did (i.e., the process of research you engaged in, not the results of that process – those results are your actual thesis), what you learned about yourself and about your learning process, any great insights or challenges you had along the way, what you think your thesis project means, etc. It also helps the reader/spectator/listener know how to approach the product. In a sense, this essay is a guide, or sales pitch even, for the experience anyone engaging your thesis is about to have. Prepare the reader for your thesis.

If you do a creative thesis, this process statement will be a more substantial document because readers of your thesis may not be able to fully appreciate your creative product. For example, if your creative thesis was a dance recital, readers won’t likely have seen the recital, nor will they necessarily be able to understand your creative process just from looking at the dance. In the process statement you’ll tell readers about that process. Likewise, if your thesis is scientific and involves lots of specialized terminology that most general readers would not know, your process analysis is a place to talk about the work in layperson’s terms. Here’s another example: imagine viewing a Picasso painting. That painting speaks for itself as a work of art. But what if we had Picasso standing next to it talking about how and why he made it? What he says would be his process analysis. The work of art and the statement aren’t the same thing, and one cannot replace the other, but both are valuable. This is a major learning moment for you because it is vitally important that you reflect on why and how you learned, not just what you learned.

Does your thesis project involve research on humans or animals?
If so, read this next section.

Academic institutions have commonly-accepted rules and constraints in place when research is conducted using humans or animals. This is well and good as it protects those beings from harm. If engagement with human beings or animals is involved in the thesis project (e.g., surveys, interviews, observation of any kind, recombinant DNA molecules, infectious agents, biohazardous materials, etc.), you must inquire about the need for review by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for possible clearance on human and animal subjects research before the project begins. This is a requirement of federal law. Do not assume this is unnecessary. The definition of human subjects research is sometimes surprising. Interviews for journalistic purposes, for example, are usually not considered research; but if the results are gathered into statistics, even informally, they may be subject to this law. Your advisor should raise this issue with you, but you are ultimately responsible for making sure your thesis work complies with IRB standards if you are using humans in your research. Failure to do this can, in extreme cases, result in financial penalties for you and your advisor. At a lesser level, failure to comply could result in your work being invalidated and unusable in the thesis, and it could
interfere with your graduation. It is sometimes thought that projects that will not be published do not require IRB approval. That’s not true in our case as all Honors theses are considered published when they are submitted to the Bracken Library.

The IRB process takes time. While some projects are approved within 2-3 days, others take 2-3 weeks. If you are planning to conduct research of this nature that may be subject to IRB regulations, and you will do so outside of the local area or outside the United States, that process always requires contact with the IRB. In those cases the approval process can take even longer. Contact them 1-2 months before you plan to leave, the earlier the better. If your project must be approved by the IRB, both you and your advisor must pass an online certification course that takes several hours to complete. Also, if your project needs IRB approval you must get that approval before beginning your research. The IRB will not retroactively approve a project that has already been completed. Finally, when you prepare your IRB proposal paperwork, be sure it is error free (including writing errors). Any errors may delay the approval process.

**It is better to be safe than sorry, so if it is even remotely possible your project might need approval, if you are talking to humans or working with animals or biological agents, go ahead and make the call to the IRB to discuss your project.**

The Office of Research Integrity can assist you in determining if your project needs IRB approval. Before you begin any project that may even remotely be subject to IRB approval, contact them at orihelp@bsu.edu or call 285-5088 and ask to speak to one of their graduate assistants.

You can find out more here: [http://cms.bsu.edu/about/administrativeoffices/researchintegrity/humansubjects](http://cms.bsu.edu/about/administrativeoffices/researchintegrity/humansubjects).

**Here are some examples of previous thesis projects:**

These thesis examples give you a sense of the range of projects Honors students have been doing. They are all, by the way, winners of the annual Joe and Carol Trimmer Awards for Outstanding Senior Honors Thesis or Project, a $1000 prize awarded to both the best research and best creative thesis. Winners are celebrated during our annual senior recognition ceremony.

**2016** Gabrielle C. Boyd, "Nobody Panic (But the Emergency Exit is Locked): A Sketch Show"
Mentor: Jennifer Blackmer

Allyson Garrett, "Breathing in Harmony": An Assessment of Unique Inspiratory Muscle Training Techniques Utilized by Patients with COPD in Pulmonary Rehabilitation
Mentor: Nicole Koontz

**2015** Stephanie Ann Sink, "Walt Disney, the 1964-65 World's Fair, and the Emergence of Audio-Animatronics."
Mentor: Bruce Geelhoed

Connor William Fak, "A Sentimental Journey: Rejuvenating Great American Soundscapes in a New Film Musical."
Mentor: Vanessa Ament

Brittany Russell, *Spanish Heritage Language Learners in East Central Indiana: Teacher's Attitudes and Beliefs*. Mentor: Lisa Kuricak

2013  Megan Harris, *Indiana’s Miscegenation Laws: An Ineffective Racist Agenda*. Mentor: John Scott Parkinson

Audrey Van Acker and Alaina Hartman, *Literacy in Delaware County*. Mentor: Karen Thatcher

2012  Elise Rorick, *Opening the Box: Exploring the Myth of Pandora*. Mentor: Jacinda Russell

Tyler Wolford, *Hospital*. Mentor: Christine Shea

2011  Whittley Lewis, *Why No Thesis?: A Rhetorical Analysis of Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*. Mentor: Paul Ranieri (English)

Abigail Hines, *Between Beats*. Mentor: Andrew Hosey (Digital Corps)


Eric Spall, *Three Camps: Drumming and Drummers in the American Civil War*. Mentor: Nicole Etcheson (History)

The form you will need to make your thesis proposal official:

[Senior Honors Thesis/Creative Project Proposal](#)

This link takes you to a fillable PDF for you to complete and print for required signatures.
Part 2: How to carry out your thesis project once it is approved

Given the wide range of topics and approaches possible, it’s less possible to offer one-size-fits-all advice. Still, there are some strategies applicable to many if not all thesis projects.

- While HONR 499 earns three credit hours like regular classes, it is unlike a regular class in that you don’t have the built-in schedule of meeting that class and your professor 2-3 times per week. The more you treat it like a regular class, the better off you’ll likely be. Otherwise it can be easy to forget about your thesis project at times.

- First, draw up a timeline of due dates and discuss them with your advisor. What are the major parts of your project and when will you have them completed? Set up a series of mini-deadlines stating when parts of your thesis will be turned in for review by your advisor and when you will have a rough draft ready. Be sure your rough draft is ready for your advisor’s review a good 6 weeks before the Honors College deadline so that you can expect to receive that draft back with corrections in time to make the final copy ready for review and correction. These mini-deadlines help both of you stay on track. Staying on track makes it more likely you’ll be able to compete for the Trimmer Prize as well.

- Set your final draft due date well in advance of the end of the semester so your advisor has time to review it and recommend suggestions for improvement, giving you time to make those changes.

- Set aside an amount of time per week sufficient enough to move your project along and meet your scheduled due dates. Stick to it as if you were attending a class. It’s very easy to blow that time off in favor of more momentarily demanding tasks. Schedule the same time of day each week, at a time when you aren’t regularly interrupted by others or other tasks. That’s a proven writing success strategy.

- Set up a regular schedule of meetings with your advisor to review your progress. This helps both of you stay on track. It can be easy for professors to forget to check on thesis students because professors are also focused on their classes that have regular meetings. This is also true if you are collaborating with another student.

- Consider any special needs, tools, resources, etc., that you will need. Arrange for them early on.

- Consider visiting the new Research Design Studio on the 2nd floor of Teacher’s College. They can help you formulate your research questions, identify resources, and give you critical feedback on your research plan. For more information, visit their webpage at: http://espace.bsu.edu/rds/

- Think well ahead if you need to schedule collaborators (dancers for your choreography, actors for your one-act play, etc.)

- If you are planning a public performance of your thesis, think about scheduling a venue and related resources early on in your process.

- BACK UP YOUR DATA AND TEXTS! FREQUENTLY! IN MULTIPLE PLACES!

- When you get to the writing stage of your thesis, having a daily or weekly minimum of written words to meet can be helpful.

- At the writing stage, a writing handbook is your friend. Call on that friend.

- Avail yourself of campus resources such as The Writing Center, the research librarians at Bracken Library, and others.

- Remember that even though you have a formal advisor, that shouldn’t stop you from seeking out other professors or individuals who can help you with some aspect of your work.
• If you are working with a topic that requires IRB approval (see above), make sure you have this approval documented. You will need to include the IRB form in your thesis binder.
• Keep a journal of your progress, noting any roadblocks, sudden epiphanies, thoughts on how it’s going, etc. This will prove extremely valuable when you write your process statement.
• Thesis work, like much of academic life, can be stressful. Get plenty of sleep, eat well, and exercise regularly. Get a parent to call and pester you about this if these are problem areas for you if that would help you.

A note about academic honesty and plagiarism:

Be sure you are adhering to university policies regarding academic honesty. Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated, and any violations of this policy may result in withholding of the Honors diploma, delay of graduation, academic sanctions, or other consequences. Remember that deficiencies of preparation are easily corrected. Deficiencies of character are much harder to correct.

Some common issues at this stage:

• What if I don’t finish in time and I have more semesters before I graduate?

You can ask your major professor for an Incomplete grade. That buys you more time to finish your project. Rules regarding Incomplete grades have recently changed, so read this carefully if this situation applies to you. An "I" grade awarded for an undergraduate course will expire as follows: if you were enrolled in HONR 499 during Fall semester, you have until May 1 of the following year to complete your thesis and remove the incomplete; for Spring and/or Summer enrollment you have until December 1 of the same year. Remember that’s the last date your grade can be changed, so the final copy must be approved by your advisor before that date. An exception is made when an extension on the timeline has been recommended by a department chairperson and approved by the appropriate dean. Should an instructor wish to extend the time frame, they may do so by submitting a request to the records area on departmental letterhead. The Registrar’s Office will send an email reminder to the student and to the instructor of an "I" grade on the student record on or about the 15th of every month.

• What if I don’t finish and I’m about to graduate?

It depends on how far behind you are. You can graduate without finishing your thesis, as long as your advisor has given you a letter grade, but you won’t get the Honors Diploma. You can remedy that by submitting the thesis after you graduate. Consult with the Honors College Dean or Associate Dean in this situation.

Is everything finished and ready to be turned in? Great. Take a minute to bask in your accomplishment. Now you’re ready to prepare the thesis for submission.
Part 3: How to submit the thesis (formatting and other formal rules)

We'll go out on a limb and admit this is not the most fun part of the thesis experience. You were born into a world and culture with certain standards already built in, whether it’s placing the fork on the left or driving on the right. The rules help us all stay neat and orderly. It’s the same here, too. Read all of this very carefully. Incorrectly formatted theses will be rejected. Avoid that irritation by doing it right the first time. This section details how to prepare your document and then how to submit it properly.

Formatting your document correctly:

Your thesis must contain the following elements, in the following order (minus any optional items, as noted below). **IF YOU ARE MISSING ANY OF THE FOLLOWING ELEMENTS ONCE YOU HAVE TURNED IN YOUR THESIS, YOU WILL BE ASKED TO MAKE THE NECESSARY CORRECTIONS.**

- **Title page**: The submitted collection must include a title page, which must be the first thing we see when we open the thesis. The title page must be formatted in a specific way: do not omit elements, add elements, or get creative with fonts on your title page. The format given is the format for master’s and Ph.D. theses, not just something we made up to irritate you. Please see the title page template in this guide for format requirements and follow it. If this is a collaborative thesis, your name goes immediately above that of your collaborator. Keep your page numbers off the title page.

- **Abstract**: The abstract must be the second page we see after opening the thesis (immediately following the title page). The submitted thesis must include a project abstract at the beginning of the collection. Please see the model abstract in this guide for format guidelines.

- **Acknowledgments**: The acknowledgments (note the spelling of this word!) may be on the same page with the abstract; if not, this should be the third page inside your thesis. Please see the model acknowledgments in this guide for format requirements. It is customary to acknowledge your thesis advisor, but you may want to recognize others who gave you help or encouragement.

- **If you have a table of contents**, place it here between the Acknowledgments and the Process Analysis Statement. (Optional)

- **Process Analysis statement**: See the note on this in Part 1 for what to include in this statement. If you are writing a research thesis, this statement should come before your thesis paper. If you are doing a creative project thesis, this statement may often form the bulk of what is included in the printed/scanned thesis, exclusive of supplements documenting your creative work.

- **Your written thesis** comes next, right here. If you did a creative thesis where the end product was not a written research paper, you may not have anything here. In that case, consider using your table of contents to point the reader to the alternative means of
communicating your thesis project you’ve used (e.g., a DVD of your dance recital, your film, your music cd, etc.)

- **Page numbers:** Unless it is absolutely impossible, each page of the thesis should be consecutively numbered, starting with the first page of your process analysis.

- **Appendices:** After the written thesis (or, in the case of a creative thesis, the process analysis), add works cited, sources, appendices, etc. A researched project should adhere consistently and correctly to a documentation style appropriate for the field of study—following, for example, such style manuals as the MLA, APA, or the University of Chicago. You MUST include a bibliography or a works cited page for any type of researched project—not just a traditional research paper but also such projects as a unit of lesson plans, handbook, publicity campaign, feasibility study, painting, dance, play, or any other project that incorporates material drawn from outside sources. *If you are unsure whether you should cite certain sources, consult your project advisor. Academic dishonesty and plagiarism will not be tolerated.*

- **Supplements:** If you have any materials other than your written work (like a DVD, CD, etc.), bring them with your printed materials when you turn in your thesis to the Honors College front desk staff. Be sure any images are included at a suitable quality level. That means 300 dpi, 24-bit color. Use common sense, though, for your particular needs. Everything needs to be legible and clean.

- **Human subjects research:** See the note in Part 1. The form from IRB noting approval must be included at the end of the thesis packet after the supplements. (This is required if you did work that falls under the category of human subjects research.)

- **Style:** The Honors College does not insist upon a uniform style sheet, such as MLA, APA, or the like. We do expect that you will have followed a style format that is appropriate to the discipline of your project/thesis and that is clear and consistent. Don’t make up your own. Moreover, your language should be free of common errors in spelling, grammar, and syntax. Your process analysis statement should also be in clear English prose that conforms to the usual standards of good academic writing. If your actual thesis/project is in a specialized style or format (like science experiments or poetry or a language other than English), it may conform to relevant stylistic standards; consult with your advisor for guidance.

- **Personal identification:** Do not include any proprietary personal information (other than your name) anywhere in or on your submitted document. Do not, for example, include your social security number, your Ball State ID number, address, etc. Do not include this or similar information for anyone referred to in your materials. If you have subjects’ data summarized in your thesis, they should not be identified by their real names or any identifying number.

- **Archives:** All projects, pending approval from the Honors College, are sent to the Special Collections area in Bracken Library where they are catalogued and kept on file for future Honors students and others to read. If you do not want us to archive the bulk of your thesis, or if you want to redact certain parts of it, you must adapt your PDF copy and/or contact the Honors College about this. Discuss this question during your required thesis conference if you think it applies to you. At minimum, your title page, abstract, and
acknowledgments must be archived. The Honors College also reserves the right not to send some theses, or parts of some theses, to Bracken Library.

- **Submission Forms:** two forms must be printed and signed. They are the Senior Honors Thesis/Project Checklist and Cover Sheet, signed by you and your advisor, and the Permission to Send to Bracken Library, signed only by you.

THE HONORS COLLEGE RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REQUEST REVISIONS FROM A STUDENT WHOSE THESIS/PROJECT DOES NOT FULFILL THE ABOVE REQUIREMENTS OR TO WITHHOLD THE HONORS COLLEGE DIPLOMA IF THE PROJECT IS NOT OF CAPSTONE QUALITY.

In summary, here are the items to be included in every thesis, in order, with any exceptions noted as optional:

1. Title page
2. Abstract
3. Acknowledgments (can be on the same page as the abstract but doesn’t have to be)
4. Table of Contents (optional)
5. Process Analysis Statement
6. Written thesis (unless it is a creative thesis project where a written paper was not the product)
7. Appendices such as works cited, supplemental images, charts, graphs, etc.
8. Physical supplements such as DVDs and CDs, etc., if any)
9. IRB form (if the thesis involved human subjects research)

**Submitting your properly-formatted thesis:**

Once you and your advisor are happy with everything – the writing is clean, free of errors, formatted correctly, checked and re-checked, then it’s time to submit your thesis. The Honors College requires the physical format of all thesis collections be uniform. We require submission of theses in **two** formats:

1. Bring a clean, printed paper copy and any supplements to the Honors College front desk in the Ball Honors House along with the required forms – Senior Honors Thesis/Project Checklist and Coversheet and Permission to Send to Bracken Library. The paper copy of the thesis SHOULD NOT be hole punched, a binder SHOULD NOT be used, and the title page SHOULD NOT be signed. The Honors College will provide a special sturdy folder for the manuscript and required forms when the materials are submitted. The checklist/coversheet MUST be signed by your project advisor for the paper copy to be submitted.

2. A PDF copy must also be provided. First, convert your Word document to a PDF file. To do this in Microsoft Word, click “Save As” and then in the “File Format” box, choose “PDF”. That PDF copy must then be submitted electronically through Blackboard. When you were approved to enroll in HONR 499, you were added to the Blackboard Community called “Honors Seniors.” You can find this community on your main Blackboard login page in the center column at bottom. You may have to scroll down to find it. If you click on that community, you will find instructions on how to electronically submit your Honors thesis in its final form as a PDF to the Honors College. (Note: if there are parts of your thesis that you do not wish to send
to the Bracken Library, you can omit them in the PDF. Your paper copy, however, must include them.

The finished copy of the Senior Honors Thesis/Project submitted to the Honors College should be an UNMARKED (no handwritten notes of any kind) original or professional copy and should be free of errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. PROJECTS THAT ARE HANDWRITTEN RATHER THAN TYPED WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED UNLESS THE STUDENT HAS RECEIVED PERMISSION IN ADVANCE. YOUR ADVISOR OR THE HONORS COLLEGE MAY ASK YOU TO REVISE PAGES THAT NEED CORRECTIONS. Any required corrections must be corrected in the paper copy and the PDF copy and both must be resubmitted via the methods outlined above.
Part 4: Examples and forms

On the next pages you'll find a sample title page, sample abstract and acknowledgments, a Project Proposal Guidelines and Form, Final Checklist and Cover Sheet, Permission to Send to Bracken Library form, and Information for Faculty Mentors.

Your title page should follow the format shown below on the next page. Lines in bold below should be bold on your title page. The advisor name goes below the words “Thesis Advisor”. Note that advisors no longer have to sign this page. The date below “Muncie, Indiana” is the month and day you are turning in your thesis. Expected graduation date is the month and year you are graduating. The only other changes you make are your own thesis information, of course, and you may choose any professional font you like. There should NOT be a page number on the title page.

Helpful Links

Information for Faculty Mentors
Thesis Proposal Guidelines and Form
Thesis Final Checklist and Cover Sheet
Permission to Send to Bracken Library
Instructions Electronic Submission on Blackboard
Human Subject Participation (IRB)
Japanese Unfiltered: Conversational and Practical Language through Manga

An Honors Thesis (HONR 499)

by

Pedro Bassoe

Thesis Advisor

Dr. Guohe Zheng

Ball State University
Muncie, Indiana

April 2010

Expected Date of Graduation

May 2010
Model abstract and acknowledgments

In general, an abstract should be less than one page in length. It should follow the model below in giving the overall purpose and main components of the thesis or project. It should be significantly shorter and more to the point than a process statement.

In the acknowledgments, you should thank your advisor and others who helped you with your thesis.

Here are a sample abstract and acknowledgments from a recent Honors thesis, Heroes in the Outfield: A Study of the American Hero in Sports Film.

Abstract

Mythology has been a part of nearly every culture since the beginning of man. Despite the American culture’s move away from myth towards science, our entertainment is littered with the same stories that existed thousands of years ago. Sports films today and in the early times of the motion picture have successfully kept the classic hero alive. The analysis of six major sports films over the last 64 years gives an idea of how consistent heroic journey stories are and how well patterned the American sports hero is. In *Pride of Yankees* (1942), *Gentleman Jim* (1942), *Brian’s Song* (1971), *Victory* (1981), *Hoosiers* (1986), and *The Greatest Game Ever Played* (2005), the heroic figures are not only similar amongst themselves, but similar to the heroic figures that have been in mythology for many years. I analyze these six films in the eye of the classic heroic journey and put together a list of characteristics that modern American sports heroes share.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Dr. Christine Shea for advising me through this project. Her help during this long and difficult task was only a small fraction of the help and guidance I received during my four-year college career.

I would like to thank Jim, Wendy, and Whitney for encouraging me to pursue this daunting task.
senior honors thesis/creative project proposal guidelines

please read before completing form below

As a member of the Honors College, you are required to complete a Senior Honors Thesis/Creative Project. This project permits you to build on your experiences throughout your college career and develop a unique product (paper or creative work). The project qualifies for three credits of HONRS 499 and is graded. For more specific information see the Senior Honors Thesis/Creative Project Guide.

The first step in undertaking an Honors project is to identify a topic and a BSU faculty member who will serve as your project advisor. If you need help developing your proposal, finding a topic, or identifying a project advisor, you are welcome to discuss possibilities with the Dean, Associate Dean, Honors Fellow, or their representative. Alternatively, if you have already determined a topic and found an advisor, you may wish to bring this completed form and thesis proposal with you for your thesis conference. At least one conference with an Honors College representative is a required part of the project process. Make your appointment for this conference by phoning the Honors College at 765-285-1024. See the Honors Thesis/Creative Project Guide for complete information on this process.

Note: You and your advisor must sign the proposal coversheet before turning in the proposal to the Honors College. Honors College approval will not be given until both signatures are received. Project proposals will not be accepted without this sheet.

In a separate, word-processed document, answer all of the questions below. Write clearly and concisely. Explain all abbreviations and technical terminology. Correct spelling and grammar are essential. The proposal should be error-free. Consider this an essay discussing your plans, not just a sentence or two answering each question. Show that you have carefully thought about your project, that you’ve done the preliminary research to give your project a solid foundation and a clear trajectory of how it will go and how you will carry it out. You don’t have to know all the answers, of course, but overly vague proposals lacking enough depth and specificity may be rejected.

Please provide the following information in the project proposal:

What are you planning to do for your Honors thesis? Indicate:

- Type of independent research on which you will build your project
  Project objective/purpose
- Project outcome/product (e.g., a paper, finished piece of research, creative activity)

Why do you want to complete this particular project? Indicate:

- How your project will help broaden your educational experience within your major
- How your project will add to your knowledge and develop your talents

For whom are you creating this project? Indicate:

- Your target audience
- What you expect others to learn from your project

If you are conducting any kind of research involving humans, animals, or biological agents or any other kind of research that is commonly required to have IRB approval, indicate your awareness of that and indicate that you are in conversation with that office about gaining the necessary approval.

The Honors College reserves the right to request revisions from a student if the project proposal does not fulfill the above requirements or if the proposed project is not of capstone quality.
Name ____________________________  Student ID # ________________
Address ____________________________  Phone # ________________
E-mail address ____________________________  Graduation Term ________________
Major(s) ____________________________  
Are you enrolled in Departmental Honors?  Yes or No
If yes, which department? ____________________________
Will you enroll in HONR 499 or a dept. equivalent? (Specify.) ____________________________
What term are you planning to enroll in HONR 499 (or the equivalent)? ____________________________
HONR 499: Will you be taking main campus courses during this term? ____________________________
DEPT EQUIVALENT: What course will satisfy your Tier 3 requirement? ____________________________
Does your project involve human or animal subjects or infectious agents?  Yes or No
If yes, have you discussed your project with an IRB representative at the Office of Research Integrity?  Yes or No
Project Advisor ____________________________
Advisor’s e-mail address ____________________________  Department ____________________________
Title of Honors Project: ____________________________
Whom did you meet with in the Honors College? ____________________________

Student’s Signature* ____________________________  Date ____________________________
*Your signature indicates that you have read, understand, and will comply with the regulations outlined in the Senior Honors Thesis/Creative Project Guide.

Project Advisor’s Signature* ____________________________  Date ____________________________
*Your signature indicates that you have read and approved the proposal and will maintain a high level of quality control during the development of the proposed project.

Honors College Approval ____________________________  Date ____________________________
SENIOR HONORS THESIS/CREATIVE PROJECT
FINAL CHECKLIST AND COVER SHEET

This sheet must accompany your submitted thesis/project. The person who receives your manuscript will do a spot-check on the underlined requirements.

Name____________________________________________ Student ID #__________________
Address____________________________________________ Phone #__________________
E-mail address_______________________________________ Graduation Term____________
Major(s)__________________________________________________________________
Project Advisor_________________________________________________________________
Title of Honors Project__________________________________________________________

Is your thesis to fulfill departmental honors requirements only?     ____________

Before turning in your thesis/project collection to the Honors College, please complete the following checklist:

☐ Thesis in correct formats, both a printed copy and a PDF scan
☐ Project supplements prepared
☐ Title page in place and in correct format
☐ Abstract in place
☐ Acknowledgments in place
☐ Process analysis statement in place
☐ Pages numbered (if possible)
☐ IRB documents in place (if required)
☐ Documentation of sources and any other appendices in place
☐ Project written in good English and the information is accurate
☐ Permission to Send to Bracken Library form filled out and signed

________________________________________________________
Student’s Signature*               Date
*Your signature indicates that all requirements for the Senior Honors Thesis have been fulfilled.

________________________________________________________
Project Advisor’s Signature*       Date
*Your signature indicates that you have read and approved this thesis, that it is of Honors caliber, and that you will submit (or have already submitted) a grade for student if enrolled in HONR 499 or HONR 499N.
PERMISSION TO SEND TO BRACKEN LIBRARY

This form is intended to give you, the student, the opportunity to provide permission to the Honors College to submit the project to Special Collections in Bracken Library, or to request that the thesis (or parts) not be sent to the library and/or scanned and uploaded. If you request that certain parts of the thesis not be submitted to Bracken, you must provide the information/documents that this form requests. The Honors College requires that the title page, abstract, and acknowledgements be scanned for archival purposes. Media (films, recitals, art) submitted as part of an Honors Project are sent to Bracken Library but are not made available in the on-line archive unless they are incorporated into the text of the thesis/project.

Please submit this form with your thesis/project to the Honors College.

Name_____________________________________ Student ID #__________________

E-mail address________________________________________________________________

Project Advisor________________________________________________________________

Title of Honors Project________________________________________________________

Please check:

☐ I agree to allow the Honors College to submit my Senior Honors Thesis/Creative Project to Special Collections in Bracken Library and to allow Special Collections to scan/upload any part of my thesis for its online archive database.

☐ I agree to allow the Honors College to submit my Senior Honors Thesis/Creative Project to Special Collections in Bracken Library, but I have removed certain parts of my thesis that I do not want archived. My PDF file reflects these redactions: ___________________________________________________________________

☐ I DO NOT want my thesis sent to Special Collections in Bracken Library. At minimum, your title page, abstract, and acknowledgments must be archived and digitized. My PDF includes these pages only.

___________________________________________ Student’s Signature   Date

THE HONORS COLLEGE RESERVES THE RIGHT NOT TO SEND ALL OR PART OF ANY THESIS/PROJECT TO BRACKEN LIBRARY IF THERE ARE SIGNIFICANT ISSUES OF QUALITY, COPYRIGHT, THE PRESENCE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION, OR OTHER CONSIDERATIONS THAT ARE DEEMED INAPPROPRIATE FOR DISSEMINATION.
Thank you for agreeing to work with one of our Honors students and for your commitment to undergraduate education and research. This document describes your role as the advisor of an Honors thesis. A complete thesis guide is available on the Honors College website. In addition to these formal guidelines, here’s some advice for you on making this a successful experience.

In order to graduate from the Honors College and receive the Honors Diploma, students are required to complete a Senior Honors Thesis/Creative Project. The project qualifies for three credits of HONR 499 and is graded by you. You should see HONR 499 among your list of courses for which grades are due at the end of the relevant semester. Remember to record a grade for this student! If the student doesn’t complete the project by the end of the semester, please award an “Incomplete” and then change it to a letter grade when completed. The Honors College can substitute a departmental capstone number for HONR 499, but this must be requested on the Project proposal (there are no automatic substitutions); alternatively, the department may wish to substitute HONR 499 for a departmental capstone requirement.

The student will already have all the procedural information below. The information below is intended as a reference for you.

The first step in undertaking an Honors project is to identify a topic and a BSU faculty member who will serve as the project advisor. At least one conference with the Honors College personnel is a required part of the project process. The official thesis appointment consists of the final, approved, signed, project proposal form. The proposal coversheet must be signed by you and the student before it is turned in to the Honors College. Honors College approval will not be given until both signatures are received, and the student cannot enroll in HONR 499 without this approval. If a departmental course is to be substituted for HONR 499, this must also be on the submitted proposal, so that we can make the necessary adjustments to DegreeWorks.

The following information must be included with the project proposal form (written by the student with your input):

1. What the student will do. The student should indicate the type of independent research or inquiry being proposed; a description of the project’s objective/purpose; the intended outcome of the project (e.g., a paper, finished piece of research, creative activity).

2. Why the student wants to complete this particular project.
3. For whom this project is being created. The students should indicate the target audience (real or imagined) and describe the value of the project to others.

The written proposal does not have to be lengthy; a couple of pages describing the project is usually adequate. (You may, of course, require a lengthier document.)

Completed and approved senior Honors theses are archived in Bracken Library and are available online from 1963 to the present: http://cardinalscholar.bsu.edu/handle/123456789/14. Theses for Departmental Honors or for the Miller Business Honors Program are not archived with Honors Theses unless the student is also member of the Honors College.

We rely on the faculty mentor to ensure that the student creates a final, submitted manuscript that is well-written, complete, and appropriate for a public archive. If you have concerns regarding the quality of the final document, please contact the Associate Dean of the Honors College (285-1024) for further discussion. The grade for the course is awarded by you; this grade enables the student to graduate from Ball State. Final approval for the Honors Diploma awaits review and – if needed – revisions that may be required by the Honors College. (This is stated several times in the Thesis Guide provided to the student.)

The senior Honors Thesis/Project should meet the University Core Curriculum goals for learning outcomes in Tier 3. These outcomes, as applied to the senior Honors thesis are (emphases added):

A Tier 3 course enables students to (a) use information from multiple sources to evaluate competing hypotheses, form judgments, and provide rationales; (b) critically analyze the strengths and weaknesses of various logical arguments and decision-making strategies; (c) demonstrate effective, refined writing and presentation skills as appropriate to the discipline.

Students should be able to

- articulate an effective plan of study and preparation appropriate to the proposed honors project
- appropriately synthesize information from multiple sources into an intellectual framework, as appropriate to the discipline
- critically analyze and reflect on their own personal development, as appropriate to the project
- convey their project outcomes through well-crafted discussions, writings, presentations, and/or activities, as appropriate to the project
- articulate their project outcomes in an effective, refined written document
- elucidate and nurture their own place within contemporary American society
In order to help both you and the student see that these goals are met, students must write a process analysis statement to accompany their thesis. Often, the product they produce (especially projects where the end product is a work or art, a performance, etc.) doesn’t allow us to understand the process that went into making it. Thus, we ask students to engage in some critical reflection on their process, some meta-thinking about learning. This applies to scientific or other highly technical theses wherein the language used may not be very accessible to readers outside the field, and thus some explanation of process in layperson’s terms is helpful. Every student, regardless of the nature of their project, must write a process analysis essay. There’s more on this in the Honors Thesis Handbook.

If engagement with human beings is involved in the thesis project (e.g., surveys, interviews, observation of any kind), the student should inquire about the need for review by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for possible clearance on human subjects research before the project begins. This is a matter of federal law. Please do not assume that this is unnecessary; in extreme cases, the student (and you) could be liable for a financial penalty. In any case, the work could be invalidated and interfere with the student’s graduation. See the following for more details:
http://cms.bsu.edu/About/AdministrativeOffices/ResearchIntegrity/HumanSubjects.aspx.

IRB rules are complicated. Be safe and check with them to be sure you and your advisee are in compliance.

When the project is completed and submitted to the Honors College, you will be asked to complete a short assessment of the student’s success in meeting the Tier 3 learning outcomes as described above. You’ll receive an email with a link to that assessment.

**Some Helpful Hints for Ensuring Success in Advising an Honors Thesis**

Some faculty members are very experienced in guiding thesis projects; others are new to the process. Either way, you may find the following advice helpful:

**Before completion:**

- Have a conversation about what a successful piece of research or creative project looks like in your field and what it will/should look like in this particular student’s case.
- Set up a schedule of meetings between you and the student and hold him/her to it. Every other week is a good standard, but whatever you both find helpful will work. Once a month may be too infrequent, as it may not allow you catch problems in time to correct them. It’s easy to forget about advisees (and for them to forget about you) if this is not done, as everyone is busy with their regular classes. Students regularly have an issue with
time management of the thesis because we aren’t in their face several times a week in regularly-scheduled class meetings.

- If IRB approval is needed, make sure that’s been given and documented (have the approval from IRB in writing as you’ll need to include it in the thesis) before you get started.

- Using the thesis proposal as a guide, you may choose to set up a contract in writing for what the student will do and when in order to be successful in their project. Work out a timetable with the student for when significant parts of the thesis will be turned in to you and when the completed draft and final copy are due. The student should make the completed draft and final copy due dates early enough before the end of the semester so you have time to read and respond to it and so the student has time to make any corrections or changes.

When the thesis is completed and ready to turn in:

- Does the project match the project approved by the Honors College and documented in the project proposal form?
- Has the project achieved a level of quality consistent with standards in your field? Are you happy with it?
- If the project feels slight, lacking in intellectual heft, or otherwise insufficient, discuss what the student can do to improve it. The thesis should feel like a substantial piece of work, a capstone project, not simply a paper one might do in a regular class. In cases like this, you are welcome to discuss any concerns with the Associate Dean (285-1024).
- Has the student completed the process analysis essay discussing the thinking behind and process of completing the project?
- Are the references in a format consistent with a style in your discipline? Is it grammatically correct? Are there spelling errors?
- When the student has met the formatting instructions and requirements outlined in the Honors Thesis Guide and is ready for you to sign the Final Checklist and Cover Sheet, sit down with the student and go over the formatting checklist to be sure all items have been met. We no longer require that you sign the title page of the thesis itself.
- Award a letter grade for the thesis and research process.

Questions? Contact the Associate Dean at 285-1024.

Again, thank you for your mentorship of this student and support of the Honors College.