

The ULM Honors Program Thesis guidelines



Special thanks to the Director of the University of Toledo Honors Program and its Director

GENERAL INFORMATION

These guidelines are for students working on Honors in the University. This distinction will be awarded to those completing an Honors project or thesis.

Definition of the Honors project or thesis

The project/thesis is usually considered somewhere between a research paper and a master's thesis in terms of difficulty. It has greater depth than a research paper that is normally done in an undergraduate class. It will reveal a more thorough understanding of the critical or secondary literature (information on the subject) and data relevant to the topic than a regular undergraduate research paper would involve. The student will most likely make use of primary and secondary sources. The student should not rely solely on what others have said and done, but should bring his/her own analysis and insights to the texts and data.

There are several forms the actual project/thesis may take. In some areas, students will be engaged in hands-on research by doing experiments, collecting and analyzing data. In certain areas of humanities, students may choose to demonstrate mastery by composing a group of poems, short stories, plays, etc. Alternatively, some students might opt to produce and direct a quality video or plan and perform a recital. This list is by no mean exhaustive; the form the project/thesis takes will depend upon the discipline and what the adviser approves. Ultimately, the possibilities are only limited by the imagination and creativity of the student. Remember that the Honors project/thesis can be on a topic outside of the student's major and can be interdisciplinary.

Honors Project/Thesis Committee

The Committee should be composed of a) an Honors Project/Thesis adviser; the adviser can be any ULM full-time faculty member b) an Honors Council Member (must be part of the Council for at least two of the three semesters that the student will take to develop the project/thesis), and c) the third member of the committee will be from the faculty at large.

The beginning

Because the project/thesis requires more than an ordinary research paper, students will have typically three semesters in which to complete the work. Work on the project/thesis usually begins during the first semester of the junior year when the student find a faculty mentor and begin developing an idea. Throughout the next three semesters, the student will continue to work closely with the project/thesis adviser to complete the process. The student must enroll in the Honors Project course while working in the project/thesis. The final product will be completed and presented during the second semester of his/her senior year, approximately six weeks before graduation. Students will submit three copies: two are to be provided to the Director of the University Honors Program and the third to the project/thesis adviser.

TIMELINE

It is imperative that you keep in mind the following suggested timeline. The project/thesis should start right after your sophomore year. You may start looking at potential topics even before then. In addition, you should begin looking for a faculty adviser as soon as possible. The earliest you may register for HNR415 Honors Project is during the first semester of your junior year.

1. Begin Project/Thesis research

Ordinarily you should start your project in the first semester of your junior year. By the end of the semester you should 1) be familiar with project/thesis requirements and guidelines and 2) have a faculty project/thesis adviser.

2. Submit Project/Thesis Agreement Form

By the second semester of your junior year, you should 1) register for HNR415, 2) generate and develop an idea, 3) submit an annotated bibliography, 4) Submit your Honors Project/Thesis Agreement Form and 5) submit a one-page prospectus of your project/thesis

2a. An annotated bibliography will be submitted to your adviser and the Honors Program Director. Each entry on the bibliography will be followed by a brief description of information contained in the source. Much of this information will have already been collected while searching for and developing an idea. This bibliography is by no means the final list of sources to be used.

2b. The prospectus is a description of what you plan to do and how you plan to do it. It should be submitted to your adviser and approved by the Honors Program Council to receive credit for HNR415

3. Submit final rough draft

During the first semester of your senior year, you must 1) register to HNR415, 2) complete a final bibliography and b) submit a complete introduction, review of literature and the first chapter of the project/thesis to the Honors Council to receive credit for HNR415

4. Final submission and presentation

During the second semester of your senior year you must register for HNR415. A presentation of your Honors project/thesis will take place no later than a month before your graduation. Your adviser and you will make the necessary arrangements to have a date and place where the presentation will take place. The presentation will be open to all ULM faculty and students. The presentation should be a Power Point or the like that will summarize and highlight the most important matters of your project/thesis. The length and format of your presentation will be approved by your adviser. The final copy should be ready for submission 10 days after the presentation. You will submit two copies to the Honors Program Director, one will go to the ULM Library, one will go to the ULM Honors Program office, and one copy will be submitted to your adviser.

HONORS PROGRAM PROJECT/THESIS AGREEMENT

The objective of the Honors Program Project/Thesis is that the student will write a thesis or create a project on a topic, which can be within a student's major, outside his/her major or interdisciplinary. This intellectual exercise will help to prepare the student for graduate school or can be used to demonstrate to future employers the comprehensive requirements of his or her educational experience.

Duties of the adviser

The project/thesis adviser of _____, Honors Program student who is a/an _____ major, agrees to work with the student in defining a topic and providing direction and assistance as needed during the project/thesis. The adviser will meet with the student weekly or as needed to provide direction, check on progress and assist in resolving problems. The adviser will report to the Honors Council any problems that may occur during the completion of the project/thesis. The adviser will coordinate with the Honors Program Director in order to arrange the appropriate place for the final presentation of the project/thesis.

Duties of the Committee

The members of the committee will act not only as readers, but also as editors while the student is in the process of working on the Honors Project/Thesis.

Duties of the student

The student will initiate the project/thesis process and arrange for a conference with the adviser once per week or as needed. The student will provide progress reports to the adviser and to the Honors Program Director as requested. When the student has completed the project/thesis, he/she will provide three copies to be distributed to the Director of the Honors Program and to the project/thesis adviser.

Honors Program Student

Project/Thesis Adviser

Second Committee Member

Honors Council Member of the Committee

Honors Program Director

**THE HONORS PROJECT/THESIS PROSPECTUS
PART I**

PRELIMINARY ABSTRACT: Describe your overall topic in terms of (1) the general issue with which you are concerned, (2) the specific question or questions you have formulated as your particular emphasis, including any hypothesis you have formulated, and 3) the general ways in which you will go about addressing your question. THIS ABSTRACT MUST BE ONE PAGE DOUBLE SPACED.

THE HONORS PROJECT/THESIS PROSPECTUS PART II

Address each section in turn, using these section headings in your discussion to clearly indicate each section. Each discussion should be no more than one page. If you are doing a creative project, you may use Part II of the Prospectus if the format is useful to the project (see the description of creative project).

Work with your adviser to adapt the terminology used in each section below to your particular discipline.

I. BACKGROUND/LITERATURE REVIEW

Summarize the project/thesis or explain the perspectives that will provide information about your research topic. Be specific in terms of contributions of individual researchers, theorists, methodologies, critics, etc., to your line of inquiry.

II. RESEARCH QUESTION

How does your work relate to the background you have discussed above? What is the particular question or theme that you will address? What similar work has been done in your field? Do you have a working hypothesis or perspective?

III. METHODOLOGY/APPROACH

How will you go about addressing your question? Be specific in terms of research, design, procedures, analysis of primary sources, etc., as appropriate to your discipline(s).

THE HONORS PROJECT/THESIS PROSPECTUS

PART III

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY as defined on page 3

List below the major sources you will be using. Include texts, documents, data sets, interviews, professional journal and other periodicals, monographs, government documents, etc.

CREATIVE PROJECT OPTION

If you are doing a creative project such as a recital, art exhibit, video, creative writing, etc., you are required to submit an explanatory text, description of the project, or other written materials with the project. The nature of the written component to the project is to be agreed upon between you and your adviser and specified in the prospectus. For example, if you plan a recital or art exhibit you might research and write program notes and arrange for publicity. If you produce and direct a video, you might keep a journal of the project while it is in progress and have a written text to accompany the video. **The creative work alone is not acceptable.** It must be accompanied by written material as approved by your faculty project adviser. The prospectus, or portions of the prospectus, may or may not be useful for the creative project. This will depend upon the nature of the project and your faculty adviser.

Project/Thesis Outline

You may be asking yourself where to begin. The structure of the project/thesis is similar to papers you have written before. However, the amount of work and time needed to successfully complete a project/thesis should not be underestimated. In order to help put the workload into perspective, the following generic outline is given. Organization will vary according to your discipline, but your project/thesis can be thought of as being composed of five chapters of varying lengths.

Chapter I: Introduction

- Introduce the thesis subject, what is the project/thesis about?
- Background of the problem/topic
- Statement of the problem
- Purpose of the study
- Questions to be answered
- Assumptions you make in stating thesis question
- Importance of the project/thesis
- Scope and limitations of the study- narrow the focus
- Outline of the remainder of the project/thesis

Chapter II: Review of the Literature

- Overview
- Historical background of the problem/topic if appropriate
- Summary of existing studies relative to what has been found, who, what, where, when and how as appropriate to your particular discipline
- Establishment of possible need for this study and the likelihood of obtaining meaningful, relevant, and significant results
- Report on the literature/studies reviewed:
 - a. Selection and arrangement of literature reviews is often presented in terms of questions to be considered, hypotheses set forth, or objectives or specific purposes
 - b. Types of literature to be considered include books, periodical articles, monographs, bulletins, reports, theses, dissertations, papers presented at professional meetings, etc.
- Brief summary of literature reviewed

Chapter III: Methodology

- Overview of the chapter
- Description of research methodology or approach- surveys, analyses, etc.
- Research instruments if appropriate- tests, questionnaires, etc.
- Data collection if appropriate
- Processing of data if necessary
- Methodological assumptions
- Limitations of study- weaknesses
- Summary

Chapter IV Analysis of Presentation of Findings

- Findings or results of study are presented
- Findings are reported, furnishing evidence for each question asked or hypotheses posed
- Appropriate headings are used to correspond to main questions or hypotheses considered
- Tie together findings in relation to your theory, review of literature, or rationale (for some disciplines this is included in Chapter V and the appropriate heading of "Discussion" is added)
- Summary of chapter

Chapter V Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

- Brief summary of everything covered in the first three chapters and in finding portions of Chapter IV
- Conclusions –"so what" of findings; often this is the hypothesis restated with results
- Recommendations for implementing the findings and further research
- Brief conclusion

The format to be used will include

1. Title page
2. Abstract
3. Acknowledgements
4. Table of Contents
5. Table of Figures (if necessary)
6. List of tables (if necessary)
7. Text
8. Appendices (if included)
9. Bibliography or References

HONORS PROGRAM PROJECT /THESIS Writing Guidelines

The Honors Program project/thesis must adhere to the standards set by your adviser and should conform to accepted standards of grammar and usage. Students should follow the accepted style in their discipline for documentation of sources, bibliography, references, etc. One of the following manuals, as recommended by your discipline, should be used: *The MLA Style Manual*, *Publication Manual of American Psychological Association (APA)*, or *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

As your project/thesis represents a scholarly work in your particular discipline, it is important to ensure that its presentation meets certain standards and requirements in order that it will enjoy the widest possible readership. The purpose of these guidelines is to set down the requirements which will ensure that these standards are met and that your manuscript will be acceptable to the Honors Program and your department.

General Directions/Physical Specifications

To insure the highest print contrast, it is recommended that the manuscript be printed on laser or letter quality printer.

Font Size

Acceptable fonts are Courier and Times New Roman with a font size of 12pt.

Number of Copies

It is suggested to make four copies: one for yourself, one for your faculty adviser, one for the ULM Library and one for the Honors Program library.

Title Page

All manuscripts must have a title page and must be signed by the adviser and the Director of the Honors Program. Make sure that the adviser's name, all committee members' names and the Director's name are typed under the respective lines. The "date" should be a month and year only, no commas, brackets, etc., i.e. OCTOBER 2008.

Margins and Page Numeration

All pages should have a margin of 1" on the top except for the first page of each chapter, which should have a 2" top margin. All pages must have a bottom 1" margin and ½" left margin and 1" right margin.

The manuscript must be complete. All pages must be present and numbered in the proper sequence. The pages of the body of the manuscript including plates, blueprints, appendices, and bibliography/references must be numbered consecutively with Arabic numbers placed in the middle or even (flush) with the right margin of the page space ½" from the bottom edge.

All preliminary material such as acknowledgements, table of contents, etc., should be numbered separately using lower case Roman numerals. A number is followed for the title page but it is not

printed on the page. The lower case Roman numerals on all pages of the preliminary material and all page numbers for the first page of each chapter (other than the title page) are placed in the center of the page ½" from the bottom edge.

Style and Form

Matters of style and form for a thesis can vary from one discipline to another. *The MLA Style Manual*, *Publication Manual of American Psychological Association (APA)*, or *The Chicago Manual of Style* are commonly recommended. Your adviser will be able to direct you to the appropriate style manual for your discipline. A consistent style should be used throughout the manuscript. Generally, the main text should be double-spaced; quotations of sufficient lengths may single spaced. The title page, organization of the manuscript, and margins and page numbers are to as specified in this Honors Program Thesis Guidelines Handbook.

Illustrations, Photographs and Maps

Photographs and other illustrative materials should be attached to a separate sheet of bond paper and pressed dry to prevent wrinkling of the paper. Such pages must be numbered. A good quality wheat (library) paste or dry photographic mounting tissue is recommended. Do not use rubber cement, scotch tape or substances such as Elmer's glue.

Illustrative materials drawn on a computer, generated in black will reproduce satisfactorily while colors will appear as slightly varying shades of gray. Thus, do not rely on color as a key or code, etc.

Larger items such as maps, audio or visual tapes, or computer disks may be included in a pocket at the end of the manuscript.

Organization

While this will vary depending on the discipline, the manuscript will normally consist of the following sections which should be arranged in the sequence indicated by the corresponding number:

1. title page
2. abstract
3. acknowledgements
4. list of figures
5. list of tables
6. introduction
7. text
8. appendices
9. bibliography or references

The following are samples: