

Some Advice for Thesis Writers and Faculty Advisors

I. Especially for the student - a timeline for the thesis project:

1. Any time prior to submission of the "Proposal":
 - Consider whether you want to do the thesis project; it will offer some fine rewards, but it will also make demands on your time during the final year of your undergraduate career.
 - Consider several possible topics related to your major or minor field and some of the opportunities for research that may be available to you.
 - Visit with one or more faculty members who might serve as the advisor(s) for the project. You want to determine if the faculty member is willing to serve as advisor (Is he/she interested? Well informed on the topic of your study? Able to commit the time required to oversee the project?). Also, you need to decide what sort of working plan you and the advisor can establish to complete the project within the necessary time frame.
 - Enroll in HON 3779 (Honors Contracted Study) in Spring of Junior year as preparation for the Honors Thesis project
 - Visit with the Honors Program Director about procedures for submission and approval of the "Proposal for an Honors Program Thesis."
2. At the time you fill out the "Proposal" - prior to registration for the fall semester of your senior year:
 - Draft a prospectus of up to 500 words; this should state your intended thesis and your anticipated process of working toward completion.
 - Outline a timeline (at least month by month) for work on and timely completion of the project.
 - Identify some core resources that you anticipate using in your research.
 - Using these pieces of information, prepare the "Proposal," perhaps along with your advisor, get his/her signature, and deliver the documents to the Honors Program Director for approval.
 - Before the registration for the XXX 4999 course, complete the Independent Study paperwork for the Registrar's office, supplying a copy to the Honors Director.
 - Attach the outcome of your HON 3779 – Contracted Study – to your Honors thesis application.
 - Submit your thesis proposal no later than April 30.
3. During the work of research and writing:
 - Meet **every week** with your faculty advisor. Even if there is little (or nothing) new to report, it is essential to maintain frequent face-to-face contact for guidance and accountability.
 - Work as close to your projected timeline as possible.
 - If problems arise, do not delay in consulting your advisor and the Honors Program Director.
 - Meet formally with the university honors committee once in the fall semester and once early in the spring semester to discuss progress and to plan for the completion and presentation of the project.

- Identify an outside reader for the project. It is the responsibility of the student and advisor to identify an external reader and secure a commitment from that reader to read and evaluate the project.
4. As you approach completion of research and writing and prepare for presentation:
- Be sure that you and your faculty advisor are in frequent contact and communication about the progress of the thesis.
 - Meet with the Honors Program Director early in the semester of the presentation to set a date for the presentation, to set a working title for the project, to clarify questions about formatting of the final document, and to discuss other arrangements for the public presentation and for final preparation and copying of the thesis document.
 - Decide on the media that you want to include in your presentation. Prepare to spend 25-30 minutes summarizing your project (research question/s, process, conclusions) and to allow another 20-30 minutes for questions and feedback. How you choose to enhance your presentation with audio-visual media is up to you so long as it promotes the basic purpose of presentation and cross-examination.
5. After the presentation:
- Remind yourself that the project is not completed until a clean final copy of the document is delivered to the Honors office, at least one week prior to the end of the semester. Frequently, this will mean a final draft of the document edited and printed after the public presentation (perhaps with final adjustments identified then).
 - Prepare a final draft of the thesis project according to the guidelines laid out in the Thesis Compilation procedures.
 - Submit the official copy of the final thesis document to the Honors Program Director.
 - The Director will arrange for the copying and binding of the thesis.

II. Especially for the Faculty Advisor of the thesis - a timeline

1. Before beginning on the Honors Program thesis project, the student should meet with you to:
 - Obtain your general consent to direct the project
 - Discuss the feasibility of the intended project
 - Discuss a timeline for completion
 - Participate in a Contracted Study (HON 3779) under your supervision (Spring of Junior Year)
 - Obtain your written approval of the project's formal proposal (see page 25) and the Independent Study paperwork for the Registrar's office.
2. Once the project has been approved and the student has begun to work on the project, the faculty advisor should:
 - Meet weekly with the student to discuss progress on the project; in the early stages, this may involve helping to focus the study or suggesting directions in the research or work plan; later it may involve discussing related texts and ideas, reading parts of the thesis drafts, and suggesting necessary changes in scope, direction, strategy, emphasis, or conclusions.

- Communicate with the Honors Program Director periodically to indicate the progress of the project and attend two progress meetings with the University Honors Committee in the fall and early spring.
 - Work with the student to choose an external reader for the project. It is the responsibility of the student and advisor to identify an external reader and secure a commitment from that reader to read and evaluate the project.
3. As the project nears completion, the faculty advisor should be prepared to:
- Indicate approval or disapproval of the student's completion of the project (if communication has been regular, this should be no surprise); approval does not indicate a particular grade which the faculty member may choose to assign for the XXX 4999 course.
 - Assist the student in final preparation for the presentation of the project and, unless special circumstances prevent, be present for the presentation.