

## Honors College: Rubrics for the Written Honors Thesis and Oral Defense of the Thesis and Reading List

These rubrics are intended to guide the committee's evaluation of an Honors thesis and assist in the determination of *honors* or *no honors*.

Honors students who complete a thesis defense will be awarded *honors* or *no honors* for their work based on the evaluation of several components, with the majority of the evaluation based on the written thesis itself. The committee also considers the presentation and oral defense of the thesis, the quality of the Reading List, and the Reading List discussion.

Committee members are asked to evaluate students as *satisfactory* or *unsatisfactory* on the following categories and elements as guides. A student who attains *honors* will typically receive a rating of satisfactory on each of the dimensions below. The post-defense discussion should carefully consider the range and pattern of ratings, the rationale behind each committee member's ratings, and the relative importance of each dimension.

### WRITTEN THESIS

1. Research Question or creative challenge:
  - a. Unique research question/issue/creative challenge identified
  - b. Goals/objectives/hypotheses are explicit
  - c. Historical and contemporary contexts, assumptions/biases, or ethical considerations are identified
  - d. Thesis presented is within an academic framework
2. Methodology/approach: development:
  - a. Methodology/approach is appropriate to disciplinary/interdisciplinary focus
  - b. Topic is contextualized among sources and materials cited
  - c. Multiple perspectives are considered
  - d. Demonstrates understanding of the content, tools, and structures in the field
3. Methodology/approach: implementation
  - a. Quantitative and/or symbolic tools are utilized effectively
  - b. Evidence is sufficient to address the research question and is well utilized
  - c. Accuracy and relevance of evidence are appropriately questioned; possible times are identified

- d. Evaluates, analyzes, and synthesizes information
  - e. Demonstrates understanding of professional standards
4. Conclusions, implications, and consequences:
- a. Conclusions, qualifications, and consequences, including value of the thesis, are presented
  - b. Significance of what was discovered, learned, or created is demonstrated
  - c. Assertions are qualified and well supported
  - d. Demonstrates independent and critical thought
5. Writing
- a. Language clearly and effectively communicates ideas
  - b. Any errors in grammar, spelling, mechanics, and/or punctuation are minimal
  - c. Organization is clear and effective
  - d. Sources and citations are used correctly

## **THESIS ORAL PRESENTATION AND DEFENSE**

1. Presentation:
- a. Introduction is interesting and engaging
  - b. Speech is clear and articulate
  - c. Presentation is well-organized and easy to follow
  - d. Media and format are appropriate for the content
  - e. Presentation appropriately represents the thesis project
2. Discussion with the committee:
- a. Questions are answered well and with reference to the thesis student's own work
  - b. Demonstrates knowledge of the subject
  - c. Comfortably engages committee
  - d. Demonstrates understanding of and facility with the content of the thesis
  - e. Demonstrates understanding of and facility with the disciplinary context and implications of the thesis
  - f. Findings central to the thesis are extended to questions external to the discipline

## READING LIST DISCUSSION

1. Overall List and Discussion/Reflection:
  - a. Works demonstrate a breadth of interests and education as well as intellectual depth
  - b. Reading list primarily reflects undergraduate experience
  - c. Discussion/Reflection provides insight into the works and the student
  - d. Discussion/Reflection opens doors for engaging conversations
  
2. Conversation with Committee:
  - a. Student recognizes connections among works
  - b. Student expanded upon discussion/reflection in a thoughtful and meaningful way
  - c. Student is comfortable responding to questions from the committee
  - d. Student is able to explore threads tangential to the works
  - e. Texts are clearly demonstrated to have played a significant role in the student's academic development