Thesis Handbook

A resource for prospective and current thesis students and their advisors

The Staff of the Honors College
Introduction and Acknowledgments

The purpose of this handbook is to provide students writing Honors theses and their advisors with answers to questions which almost always arise. There is no chance that all of the questions that you will have are answered here, but a thorough reading of this handbook should provide you with some guidance. Additionally, I hope this serves as a useful reference throughout the process.

I encourage you particularly to note deadlines for forms and meetings. The guidelines are reviewed regularly and occasionally change; please be sure that you have a current edition of the handbook. Of course, if you (student OR advisor) have any questions, please contact the Honors College staff, and we will do our best to help!

Honors College Office (Deborah Small, Administrative Assistant)
207.581.3263 (fax 207.581.3265) honors@maine.edu

When I first put this together in 1998, I wrote “I trust this handbook will be helpful to our thesis students, and that they, in turn, will contribute to future versions.” While I can’t speak for the former, the latter certainly has been true. Our 1998 through 2011 graduates have been outstanding contributors! I would not have even been able to start this project without Ruth Nadelhaft’s Information for Honors Seniors and Barbara Ouellette’s help in explaining the realities of the thesis process to me. Our Honors College Associates, with whom I’ve taught Introduction to Thesis Research the past ten years, have been invaluable as well.

A note about language: Throughout this Handbook, we will use certain conventions. We use “unit administrator” to refer to your chair (if you are in a department), your director (if you are in a school), or your associate dean (if you are in neither). When we say “advisor,” we mean your thesis advisor, not your academic advisor. Almost always in this Handbook, “dean” refers to the dean of the Honors College. Finally, HON498 and HON499 semesters refer, respectively, to the first and last semesters of your thesis journey.
# Table of Contents

I. Rewards (and Challenges) of Writing a Thesis ....................... 4

Interlude: Thoughts on “Creative” Theses ................................. 7

II. Embarking on a Thesis ............................................................. 14

III. Making Life Easier ................................................................. 21

IV. The Joy of Texts: Reading Lists ............................................. 24

V. Writing the Thesis .................................................................. 26

Interlude: Tips for Sustained Writing Projects ............................ 27

VI. Problems? .............................................................................. 31

VII. The Best Defense is ............................................................... 33

VIII. Rubrics? We don’t need no stinkin’ rubrics! ....................... 39

Appendix A: Thesis as Capstone .................................................. 40

Appendix B: Sample Committee Meeting Agenda ....................... 41

Appendix C: Sample Annotated Reading List .............................. 42

Appendix D: Thesis Formatting Guide ......................................... 45

Appendix E: Sample Title Page ................................................... 53

Appendix F: Sample Abstracts ...................................................... 54

Appendix G: “Instructions to the Jury” ........................................ 56

Appendix H: Honors College Thesis Project Rubrics .................. 59

Thesis Year: Important Dates & Deadlines .................................. 63
I. Rewards (and Challenges) of Writing a Thesis

**Just what is a thesis? Why should I write one?**

Those questions have numerous answers. Students who have completed a thesis often describe it as the most exciting, fulfilling, and rewarding experience of their undergraduate career, truly the capstone. At times they might use the terms frustrating, scary, and daunting. We define the thesis as

> An opportunity to work closely with a member of the faculty on an independent research or creative endeavor that brings to a conclusion your undergraduate academic experience.

In addition to the internal rewards, a thesis can also be an entrée to academic or professional research. Furthermore, faculty thesis advisors are often the best recommendation writers for further education. Prospective employers and graduate schools are impressed by the dedication and intellectual independence required to contribute to the discipline through the writing of a thesis.

**That sounds great, but what are my options?**

Most theses are academic works, often resembling a scaled-down master’s thesis. It should be obvious, though, that a thesis is not just another research paper, not even a very, very long research paper. In addition to being more substantial, a thesis will thoroughly investigate the previous research on a topic, and, most importantly, it will also include your own insights and contributions to the topic, emanating from your critical engagement in the process.

Other theses take a “creative” (of course, all theses are creative!) approach resulting in a less traditional product. Students in art, music, new media, theatre, dance, or creative writing might find this more in line with their interests and aptitudes. Other theses might center on a new periodical, an invention, or something we might not even be able to imagine! In all of these cases, we ask for a written piece accompanying the thesis which contextualizes the work and describes its scholarly content.

The Honors thesis process at the University of Maine is decentralized. In the Honors College, we understand that the people best able to determine an appropriate thesis topic, as well as to evaluate it, are our colleagues in those disciplines.
**Do I have to write my thesis in my major?**

No, but we encourage you to bring the study of your major field to bear on your thesis work. Often a student will do a thesis that spans more than one discipline, but usually at least one is her/his major. While we encourage exploration and taking on challenges, your final year is probably not a good time to begin to master a new field of study. In addition, thesis work will be judged by the standards of the discipline, not by a relative notion of “well that’s pretty good poetry for an engineer” or “that’s pretty good lab work for an artist.” Finally, if you wish your thesis to satisfy a capstone requirement, it will certainly have to be done in your major – more on that later.

**Hmm...how long is a thesis?**

How many times have we heard that question? The answer depends on many variables including your major or area of concentration, the particular topic your thesis addresses, and the way in which you present your completed project. In the humanities and social sciences, theses often are between 50 and 100 pages; in engineering, the sciences, and mathematics, they are often shorter (perhaps 25 - 40 pages). The explanatory paper written by a student doing a “creative” or other “non-standard” thesis will be shorter, perhaps 10 - 15 pages, though a creative fiction thesis might top 200 pages!

Another way of thinking about a thesis and its length is to keep in mind that this is the outcome of two three-credit, upper-level Honors courses (HON498 and HON499), and your work should reflect that.

Regardless of the nature of the thesis, you must provide an archival copy of the work (electronic file, photographs, slides, DVDs, CD-ROMs).

**Will I be swamped in my senior year?**

We hope not – we’d hate to lose you in the swamp! Many majors accept an Honors Thesis as a capstone experience. These are listed in Appendix A or at honors.umaine.edu/academics/thesis/capstone/ (more up-to-date). If you intend your thesis to satisfy your capstone experience, the appropriate unit administrator must sign your Thesis Form Advisor and Proposal.
Some departments and programs which don’t accept the thesis as an alternative capstone do permit students to waive other requirements. Typically these are “departmental” or “technical” electives. This information is also on that webpage.

However, even if your department does not provide a formal connection between your thesis and graduation requirements, it is often the case that your thesis can grow out of or serve as complementary work to things you do for your major. For instance, if you’re writing a capstone paper in your major, you might incorporate that as a part of your thesis.

(For education majors) Usually education majors complete their capstone, student teaching, during their final semester. This requires beginning the thesis process one semester earlier (either in the spring of the third-year or the following summer). A model, developed by the College of Education, allows students to integrate their thesis work into the student teaching experience. For more information, visit the Honors Center or check honors.umaine.edu/academics/thesis/capstone/action/.

I’m doing a “creative” thesis, why do I have to do this artist’s statement thing?
All theses need to be contextualized. A science thesis is not just the results of an experiment; it includes how and why the experiment was run as it was, what research the experiment built upon, and its importance. A history thesis is not just an analysis of historical events or trends; it provides a context and framework for the analysis. In the same way, an artist’s statement, in whatever format, provides a contextualization for a creative work; such work does not exist in a vacuum either.
Thoughts on “Creative” Theses
(from someone who has been there)

What is a “creative” thesis?
All theses are, by definition, creative. However, here I am talking about a thesis that is presented in a non-standard academic format: creative writing, poetry, art, film, dance, performance, etc. Part of the joy of doing an undergrad thesis is that your interest in a style of music, prose, art, or film, (or another type of creative expression) can be used to morph your concept for a thesis into a reality. A creative thesis can be a novel, a collection of poems, a documentary, a short film, a musical composition, or anything else, as long as it illustrates serious effort and substantial creation on your part. I like to think that your piece will ultimately be an expression of yourself in a meaningful way. Otherwise, you would have done something else, right?

“I wrote poetry in middle school, can I write poetry for my thesis?”
This is key. Your thesis, regardless of the discipline or manner of presentation, will be judged by your committee as an Honors-level senior product in the area in which you are working. We wouldn’t expect a philosophy major to turn out a successful forestry thesis just because s/he “always liked walking in the woods.” You should produce a thesis based on what you have learned and experienced during your years in college. Of course, there are always exceptions; usually those exceptions are based on formal training in an artistic area.

When Should I Get Started?
Right away! A thesis can be a wonderfully freeing experience, but with that freedom there is also responsibility. People work in different ways, and this is certainly true of people pursuing artistic endeavors. I will now generalize: many of my “artistic” friends put things off until the final moment, and then the night before something is due, they lock themselves in a studio, agonize and stay up all night, and finally produce their work. This method almost certainly will not work for your Honors Thesis. Your committee will want to see the progress of your work; your advisor will be concerned with your developing work. Not to mention your
peace of mind, knowing that you are working toward your own vision.

**How Should I Choose My Advisor?**
This is perhaps particularly important in a creative thesis because you will need to get feedback about your work from your advisor, and sometimes this can be very difficult. If I may generalize again, those who pursue creative theses can be sensitive about their work. Choosing an advisor to match your level of sensitivity is important. If you want to write poetry, and your advisor thinks your poetry could use some polishing, you will need to roll with those punches. If you find that your “best” work is getting constantly criticized, either you are slightly delusional about your own talent, or your advisor and you are not a good match. The relationship with your advisor is critical to the development of your thesis. It is also possible that you are confident enough in your work that you can take criticism and make the appropriate suggested changes. You may have a more distant relationship with your advisor, and this is fine as well. It suits some people better than others. The key is to find a good balance of the amount of feedback you require (or want!) and the amount of critical insight and expectations your advisor has. This leads to a positive working partnership. There is no simple formula to find the right balance. Honestly discussing the topic and relevant expectations is an excellent way to start.

**What Kind of Things Should I Keep in Mind While Working on My Thesis?**
A part of any thesis is asking yourself the questions: why you are doing it and what do you want out of it? If you are a student who already has some experience in artistic expression, but you want to dedicate a full year to a project of your choice in an effort to increase the intensity and focus of your work, this is certainly commendable. You can really make something to be proud of, building off an existing base to produce a culminating work. You may want to think about the intended audience for your work, or is it purely personal satisfaction. In any case, you will want to approach your work with the same seriousness that any thesis deserves.
What About My Defense? How will I Be Judged?

There are no separate criteria for a creative thesis. There is a required artist’s statement that should include why you chose your particular medium of expression/creation, influences in the way you approach your work and what that approach is, and the overall experience of the process of your thesis. This is an important step, because this is your opportunity to contextualize your work for an audience, who may or may not be familiar with your methods or medium. Members of your committee who are well-versed in your medium will probably ask you questions based on their critical assessment. Members who are non-experts will want to know more generally why you chose this work to present and what it means to you. If you are presenting something that is very personal to you, which art often is, some of these questions may seem tough. You have the choice to answer however you’d like, but if you are already in touch with your artistic purpose this should be relatively easy. Don’t be caught off guard by not knowing why you did your work!

Be prepared to give a presentation of your work, perhaps an analysis of your method and approach. Be clear about how much time you spent on your work, for it is not always apparent how much effort went into a piece. (In my short documentary, for every minute of video in the final presentation, between ten and twelve hours were expended in filming, traveling, importing, editing, rendering, etc.) The question and answer session with your committee can be challenging, especially if you haven’t met with your committee often, and they are seeing the final product for the first time. This “big reveal” approach works for some presenters, who are confident their work will impress and who will have no trouble defending it. Otherwise, you will be depending on the familiarity of your work to the committee, whose feedback you chose to use or ignore. After the discussion of the reading list, you will leave the room and the committee will judge your very soul. (Just kidding, they aren’t allowed to judge souls.)

[Rylan Shook graduated from the University of Maine with a B.A. in Philosophy in 2007. His Honors thesis was a documentary film entitled The Value of Education. Rylan was an Honors College Associate 2007-2008.]
Can I (we) do a collaborative thesis?

Collaborative theses are a fairly new venture for the Honors College (as well as for honors education nationwide). The Honors College is open to exploring options for joint thesis work by **pairs of Honors students**.

The Honors College will accept proposals for collaborative theses under the following policies:

A. There is a strong rationale for the thesis to be collaborative.
B. There are **two** collaborators; **both** are Honors students.
C. The two students have the same thesis advisor (they may and probably should have some different thesis committee members).
D. The students, the advisor, and the dean of the Honors College meet prior to the start of the thesis work to discuss the structure of the project.
E. It must be clear, in writing and from the outset, who is responsible for what part(s) of the work.
F. Every attempt should be made to have a joint meeting of all members of both thesis committees as per the requirements for individual theses.
G. Each student, after the completion of the thesis but before the defense, produces a reflection on the nature of the collaboration: how it worked and what was valuable. This reflection should be included as the last appendix to the thesis.
H. The students produce two theses in which there may be some shared text/material, but which also includes their individual contributions to the project. Work done by the collaborating student is appropriately cited.
I. The students and the committees can opt for either
   1. One **three-hour** joint defense with both students and both committees
   2. Two individual, standard defenses
   In either case, the discussion of the reading lists should be separate.
J. Level of Honors and grades for HON498 and 499 is determined separately for each student.

The dean of the Honors College makes the final determination as to the acceptability of the collaborative thesis proposal.
What about a thesis which is part of a group project?
This is another relatively new venture for us in the Honors College. Here are the guidelines for acceptance of such a thesis:

A. There is a strong rationale for the thesis to be related to a group project.
B. The student, the advisor and the dean of the Honors College meet prior to the start of the thesis work to discuss the structure of the project.
C. It must be clear, in writing and from the outset, what part of the work is the thesis student's responsibility and what is the group's responsibility.
D. The thesis student, after the completion of the thesis but before the defense, produces a reflection on the nature of the endeavor with the group: how it worked and what was valuable. This reflection should be included as the last appendix to the thesis.
E. The student produces a thesis in which there may be some shared text/material, but which also includes the student's individual contributions to the project. Work done by the group should be appropriately cited.

The dean of the Honors College will make the final determination as to the acceptability of the thesis proposal.

When should I start thinking about my topic and advisor for a thesis?
If you’re reading this, then why not start now? Since these decisions are so important, we suggest you begin this process no later than the second semester of your third year. Both students and advisors have told us that an early start is the crucial factor in producing a successful thesis. Often thesis work grows out of undergraduate research experiences that students have as first-, second-, or third-year students. We here at the Honors Center are very interested in helping you make a thoughtful decision – stop by and see us anytime!

How do I sign up for my thesis?
When you get ready to embark on your thesis journey, you should enroll in HON498 (Honors Directed Study, think “Thesis I”), typically in your penultimate semester. The next semester, the semester in which you intend to graduate, you should enroll in HON499 (Honors Thesis, think “Thesis II”). Each of these courses carries three credits. If you are in a major which
accepts the thesis as a capstone experience, you should sign up for the section of the course (HON498 or HON499) corresponding to your department, regardless of whether you are using the thesis as your capstone.

*Just when do HON498 and HON499 meet? It says "TBA."*

Good question – we get asked that a lot! There are no regular meetings of HON498 and HON499. These are independent courses where you will meet regularly with your thesis advisor. Several times during the semester, the dean and the staff of the Honors College will hold meetings for all the students currently involved in the thesis process. These meetings will be used to make sure everyone knows about upcoming deadlines, opportunities, and has the chance to share information and ask procedural questions. Of course, you are welcome to set up an appointment with any member of the staff to discuss your thesis work whenever you want.

*Anything else I need to do?*

To be admitted to thesis candidacy you must complete a Thesis Form Advisor and Proposal to be signed by you, your thesis advisor, and the dean of the Honors College. If your thesis is to be your capstone experience the chair of your department or director of your school (for students in Maine Business School or the College of Education and Human Development, the associate dean) must also sign this form. This process allows you to focus your thesis work, and it provides a good way for you to begin discussions centered on your thesis. This form, and all other thesis forms, is available at the Honors Center or online at honors.umaine.edu/academics/thesis/forms/; it must be turned in no later than four weeks into the semester (as always, earlier is better) in which you enroll in HON498.

*What is this about a big yellow book?*

The big yellow book is *How to Write a BA Thesis: A Practical Guide from Your First Ideas to Your Finished Paper* by Charles Lipson (UChicago Press, 2005). We have copies available for each thesis student (as well as students in Honors 391) for her or his use during the thesis process. We ask that you put down a deposit of $10 (our cost) when you pick up the book; it will be refunded when you return the book.

Even though the title (B.A. Thesis) seems to exclude many of our students writing theses, we have found this to be a good resource and reference for all of our students. We make significant use of it in Honors 391, and it does an excellent job of addressing many of the questions, concerns, and
challenges that arise during the thesis process.

If you haven’t gotten a copy of it yet, please stop by the Honors Center!

_Is there anything I can do before my senior year? What is this Honors 391 you just mentioned?_
Glad you asked! Depending upon how much thought you have given to your thesis, there are several possibilities. If you have done some preparation and are ready to get working on your project, you can sign up for **HON397 (Honors Specialized Study)**. This is an opportunity for you to start working with an advisor, planning your thesis, and doing some research. You can take HON397 for between one and three credits.

You will need to fill out the Independent Study & Research form that you can find linked on honors.umaine.edu/formsguides/

If you’re like many students, and are still toying with ideas or perhaps have no idea at all, we suggest you sign up for **HON391 (Introduction to Thesis Research)**. This one-credit, pass/fail course is offered every semester and is designed to give you a jump start on your thesis. In fact, we suggest you take HON391 even if you know exactly what your thesis is going to be. The course covers all aspects of the thesis process from beginning to end.

In addition, we **strongly** encourage you to take any “methods” course offered in your major, even if they are not required, and pay careful attention in them. These courses provide you with the research tools you will need to do your thesis. Taking them before starting on your thesis work is an important key to producing a good thesis. Examples are:

- **CHY393 Undergraduate Seminar in Chemistry**
- **CMJ401 Speech, Space, Event: Critical Applications**
- **CMJ402 Communication Research**
- **ENG271 The Act of Interpretation**
- **HTY311 Research Seminar**
- **PSY245 Principles of Psychological Research**
- **SOC390 Logic of Sociological Inquiry**
- **SMS350 Undergraduate Seminar**
II. Embarking on a Thesis

**How do I choose a topic for my thesis?**

**How do I choose an advisor for my thesis?**

There’s a little of the “chicken or the egg” in these questions. In about equal proportions, students start with the topic or with the advisor.

Perhaps you are certain as to the topic and the focus of your thesis. In this scenario your next step is to find an advisor. Topic in hand, you might informally chat with professors with whom you have had good experiences in the past. One of them might be a good candidate, or s/he might be able to direct you to others for whom the topic might be more appropriate. This may take some time, but you will be learning in the process. Don’t be afraid to knock on doors; most professors don’t bite.

Alternatively, perhaps you have a particular professor in mind who you always thought would be a perfect thesis advisor. Your next step is to see if the professor has ideas that might excite your interest. If your first choice doesn’t work out, there will certainly be other faculty members who have piqued your interest. Keep an open mind; enjoy your talks with these scholars.

You will make a better impression if you first do a little research to learn about the faculty member’s scholarly interests. Departmental web pages are an excellent place to do this, or, if you want to cast a slightly wider net, check out the “Researcher Profiles” listing at the Center for Undergraduate Research website (cugr.umaine.edu). Then look up some recent papers s/he has written and peruse them – the faculty member will be flattered, you will have a better idea of the research, and you will have a place to start a conversation.

**What is the most important decision I will make?**

Most would agree that it is choosing your thesis advisor. You will have to work very closely with this individual over the course of an entire year. This should be and often is an immensely rewarding situation, but it can be somewhat problematic if you are not careful.

Your choice should be based on the scholarly expertise of the potential advisor as well as the ability of the two of you to communicate and collaborate on your endeavor. **The relationship must be one of mutual respect: as you rely on your advisor for support and encouragement,**
you must demonstrate a serious and scholarly commitment to work. Often students find that they are most comfortable working with advisors with whom they’ve already taken classes. This is also more comfortable for the advisor who has a sense of the student before embarking on the thesis. While this may require that the student be somewhat flexible in choice of topic, it may turn out best for both student and advisor.

Regardless of any prior relationship, it is crucial that both student and advisor have a clear understanding of the expectations of their role in the project. It is advisable that they devote at least one meeting early each semester to discuss the plan of work for the time ahead.

**What does my advisor do?**

It is essential that you and a prospective advisor completely understand the responsibilities of the thesis advisor. We want both of you to appreciate the commitment. Moreover, irrespective of any expectations you may have of your advisor,

YOU are responsible for the timely and successful completion of your thesis. It is this independence and commitment that separates thesis work from normal coursework.

That said, the thesis advisor agrees to

- work with the student to refine and focus the student’s interests into a suitable thesis project;
- provide, for each semester of thesis work, a clear expectation for the thesis/project, addressing benchmarks, length, assessment, and other aspects germane to work in the particular discipline (see Appendix H for Honors College Thesis Project Rubrics);
- help identify appropriate thesis committee members;
- convene a meeting, no later than three weeks into the HON499 semester (preferably near the end of the HON498 semester), with the thesis committee to address the expectations for the thesis;
- be prepared to meet with the student regularly (at least biweekly; we encourage weekly meetings) throughout the thesis project;
- inform the dean of the Honors College if there appears to be any indication that the thesis project is not on track for completion;
- read and comment on drafts of (parts of) the thesis as it develops;
- chair the student’s thesis & reading list defense;
- chair the thesis committee’s deliberation on the level of honors;
• grade the student in HON498 and HON499; and
• if possible, participate in the year-end Honors Celebration.

If my thesis is to fulfill my capstone requirement, does my advisor have to be in my department or school?
Usually. However, in some situations faculty members in other disciplines may be perfectly qualified to supervise your thesis. You’ll have to check with your unit administrator, and, of course, you’ll need her/his approval on Thesis Form 1 Advisor and Proposal.

Does my thesis advisor have to be a member of the Faculty of the Honors College?
Yikes! No. Of the 600 or so faculty members on campus, about 30 teach regularly in the Honors College; we don’t want to be that limiting.

Okay, so does my thesis advisor have to be a member of the University’s faculty?
To be honest, we think so. Your advisor has to give you a grade (in Honors 498 and 499); it’s much less complicated if s/he is a faculty member. In some cases the best possible advisor is available and willing, but not a faculty member. We can work it out, but you will have to convince the dean that this person is familiar with the area you are going to study and comfortable in the academic setting. One model that often works is to have co-advisors, with one a faculty member and one not.

Okay, I have an advisor - what is a thesis committee?
Your thesis committee is composed of your advisor, who chairs the committee, and four additional members. These members serve as additional readers for your thesis, providing you with guidance, other perspectives, and balance. This committee determines what level of honors you will receive.

Usually two or three members of your committee, in addition to your advisor, will be from your department or a closely related one and will have a working knowledge of your thesis area. At least one of your committee members should be a current or recent preceptor in the Civilizations sequence (see honors.umaine.edu/people/faculty/). In addition, at least one member of your thesis committee should be from outside the area in which your thesis is written. Of course, individuals might fill more than one of these roles.
Before asking individuals to serve on your committee, discuss the membership with your advisor; this is both useful and respectful.

The dean of the Honors College can also help you identify committee members. **Your committee must be fully constituted by the end of the HON498 semester.** Their signatures should be recorded on Thesis Form Thesis Committee which will be signed by your advisor and the dean of the Honors College. You should convene a committee meeting before the end of your HON498 semester or, at the latest, by the third week of your HON499 semester.

**NOTE:** To be enrolled in Honors 499 you must have completed and turned in Thesis Forms 1 and 2.

**Do all the members of my thesis committee have to be on the University’s faculty?**

Not at all. Students often have other folks involved who have an interest or expertise in the area: lawyers, physicians, faculty/professionals at other institutions, educators, business folk, etc. Likewise, professionals at the University and advanced graduate students are often perfect for a thesis committee, providing valuable perspectives or resources. In general, these should be limited to one or, at the most, two members of the committee.

**What should I tell the additional committee members?**

It is important that each committee member knows what you are doing for your thesis, has a sense of the thesis process, and understands her/his role. A brief list of committee members’ responsibilities is provided here for you and your prospective committee members.

**Thesis committee members agree to**

- provide informed guidance to the student as appropriate;
- be willing to meet occasionally with the student;
- attend a meeting to address expectations for the thesis;
- read and comment on drafts of the thesis in later stages of its development where appropriate; and
- participate in the student’s thesis & reading list defense and the determination of the degree of honors awarded.

The word “appropriate” is chosen advisedly here. In some cases, committee members will only interact at the committee meeting and the defense. In other cases, they will have been chosen to provide specific expertise to give
feedback in a particular area. Of course, it is important that you make it clear what your mutual expectations are.

**What if the members of my committee from outside my discipline don’t understand my thesis work?**

That is more or less the point! Members of your committee provide different perspectives. The ability to explain a complicated topic, one with which you are intimately familiar, to someone with less background in the subject than you is a crucial aspect of academic communication.

The external members of your committee are intellectually curious, so they will be a good audience for you to educate. They may provide some keen insights and innovative ways of thinking about your topic simply because their perspectives are different and they aren’t trained in the field. In addition, they will almost always be engaged and excited about the discussion of your reading list. Choose wisely!

**What happens at the thesis committee meeting?**

This is an opportunity for the committee members to meet with you, meet each other, discuss the expectations and scope of the thesis, and for the committee to familiarize itself with the Honors thesis process up through the final assessment. It’s a good time for committee members to hear what you plan to accomplish and to make suggestions. By this time, the student and advisor will have a good, but not unalterable, idea of how the thesis will unfold. This meeting typically lasts about an hour; a sample agenda for this meeting is included as Appendix B.

Sometimes these meetings are over before you know it. Other times the committee members have lots to say—and all sorts of suggestions. Take this opportunity to record those suggestions, and later sit down with your advisor to determine which are workable, which are problematic, and which are completely off-the-wall; you’ll get all kinds. However, often ideas that are tossed around at these meetings become invaluable parts of your thesis. This meeting also is an opportunity to make sure everyone involved understands the format of an Honors thesis defense.

We encourage your advisor to share the Thesis Rubrics (see Appendix H) with the committee. You and your advisor should have already looked these over as a guide to expectations for the thesis process.
The earlier this meeting is held, the better! [We strongly encourage you to have it before the end of your HON498 semester!] In addition, you will be more successful in scheduling the meeting if you begin the process early. Check out Meeting Wizard or Doodle, discussed in Section III!

What if I can’t get all the committee members to the meeting? Can I meet with them separately?
Meeting with committee members individually in lieu of a meeting is, at best, a mediocre idea. The idea of the meeting is to receive the collective thinking of the committee and also to make sure that everyone hears the same thing from all parties. If you start soon enough you should be able to find a compatible time to get everyone at the meeting, the longer you wait, the more crowded calendars become. Don’t forget Meeting Wizard and Doodle! If you’re still having trouble finding a time, talk to your advisor or the dean, perhaps they can help. Only as a last possible resort should you schedule a meeting that not everyone can attend.

Is there a difference between HON498 and HON499?
We usually suggest that you use HON498 to investigate your subject thoroughly including reviewing the appropriate literature, outlining your thesis, and embarking on your research program. You are strongly advised to use your time in HON498 wisely; it is very common that thesis writers have a much more stressful thesis writing experience than is necessary because they neglected to utilize their time in HON498 effectively. As a rule of thumb, you should be spending eight to ten hours each week working on your thesis, starting from the beginning of your HON498 semester and continuing through the completion of the thesis.

In HON499, you will be able to complete your research and work through several drafts of your thesis culminating in the final version. Of course, different disciplines have different models; in some cases you may be doing research right up until April, in others you may be writing chapters while your advisor is reading others. One thing is certain: the more you complete in HON498, the better!

Almost every thesis student who has come to talk with the HON391 Introduction to Thesis Research class has said the most valuable lesson to be learned in doing a thesis is: get off to a good start and work consistently, rather than allowing yourself to think “Oh, I have plenty of time!” Use your time wisely and remember that you need to “have a life.” Your thesis work should be exciting, not tedious.
**Do I have to complete HON498 & HON499 in consecutive semesters? Can I do part of my thesis in the summer?**
Most often the thesis is done in consecutive semesters, but that is not a requirement. Sometimes curriculum or travel requirements make it necessary to “skip” a semester. Keep the big picture in mind! Students sometimes take HON498 in the summer or work independently getting ready for the next semester. However, we do note that trying to do HON499 the summer after commencement is often not successful.

**Anything special that I should know or do?**
Most Honors theses don’t require any special permissions. Some do. In particular, if your thesis involves human subjects (including surveys and most interviews), animal care, recombinant DNA, or hazardous materials, you must receive clearance from the appropriate committee or authority. You should discuss this with your advisor; often, s/he will have experience in securing the proper form of authorization.

**Okay, so what are my responsibilities besides, of course, writing the thesis?**
That’s a good question. We discussed the responsibilities of the advisor and of the thesis committee members, but what about the student? In addition to the obvious…

**The thesis student agrees to**
- turn in all thesis forms on time and completed to the Honors College office;
- organize and schedule the thesis committee meeting before the third week of the HON499 semester and preferably before the end of the HON498 semester;
- attend and be prepared for regular (we encourage weekly) meetings with her/his advisor – if a meeting must be cancelled, provide plenty of notice;
- secure, with the advisor’s assistance, any necessary special approval for the research;
- keep all committee members informed as to the progress of the thesis project;
- inform the dean of the Honors College if there are concerns with the process or indications that the thesis project is not on track for completion;
- participate in the Honors Thesis Symposium if appropriate; and
- attend the Honors Celebration!
III. Making Life Easier (and Better!)

Are there any things that will make my life easier while I am working on my thesis?

No. Just kidding. We hope that you get support from your fellow Honors students (particularly your peers who are engaged in the thesis process), your advisor, and your committee members. The dean and staff of the Honors College will be glad to help in any way we can. Here are some “perks” that we provide as well as some other good resources:

- **Money:** The Honors College is committed to providing support for our thesis students. Reasonable funding requests of less than $200 to support thesis work will be considered, and, whenever possible, approved. [See Barbara for details before making any purchases! Note that receipts must be submitted within 1 month of purchase.]

- **More Money:** The Honors Research and Travel Fund provides grants of up to $500 in two grant cycles each year. Guidelines and application forms can be found at the Honors office or at honors.umaine.edu/opportunities/research-and-travel-grants/.

- **Thesis Fellowships:** Depending upon funding sources, thesis fellowships are sometimes available for Honors students working on their theses. For the 2009-10 and following four academic years there are 6 INBRE fellowships available to students working in the broadly-defined area of functional genomics. For more information contact Keith Hutchison (for science questions) or the dean (for administrative questions). Each year we are able to offer a Reed Fellowship (for chemistry/pre-med) and a Jones Fellowship (pre-law in the public arena). Each of these fellowships provides a stipend of at least $2500.

- **Library:** All third- and fourth-year Honors students have special borrowing privileges at Fogler Library allowing them to take out (most) books for extended periods of time, usually a semester. **Note:** This does not excuse Honors students from library fines!

- **Honors Center:** The Honors Center is open 24 hours every day. To access the Honors Center (front door of Colvin Hall) via your MaineCard, sign a building use contract at the Center or at honors.umaine.edu/forms guides/building-use-form/.
• **Online Form Updates:** You can update most of your thesis forms (contact info, thesis info, committee membership, reading list, etc.) at honors.umaine.edu/formsguides/thesis-forms-update/. Changes are, of course, subject to verification by the Honors College.

• **Meeting Wizard:** One of the most useful tools we’ve discovered recently is Meeting Wizard. It is a slick way to schedule meetings with several different people and it really cuts down on multiple emails. It is particularly useful for scheduling the preliminary meeting and the thesis defense. You can start using it—no registration or fee is required—at www.meetingwizard.com. A similar online service is Doodle at www.doodle.com.

• **Thesis Talk:** Located within the *Thesis* subconference of the *Honors College* conference on FirstClass, this is the online community hangout for students working on their Honors theses. No question will go unanswered, and some of the answers are even right. It’s also a good place to vent, relieve stress, and arrange for study/pizza dates! The Honors College staff does wander through every now and again, but they try to be helpful and will definitely not be judgmental. They’ve been there themselves.

• **CUGR:** The Center for Undergraduate Research works to connect students and research projects on campus. If you don’t have an advisor or a project, checking the CUGR Inquiry database that can be found on the website (cugr.umaine.edu) is a good idea!

• **The Compleat Undergraduate Toolbox:** The Honors College, in collaboration with CUGR, presents a series of workshops and discussions on topics of interest to thesis writers, e.g. human subjects review, Endnote/Zotero, research ethics, creating posters, formatting in Word, and others. Watch for postings of The Compleat Undergraduate Toolbox in First Class conferences!
What other campus resources are available to me?

- **Writing Center**
  “Our goal is to help you become a better writer and we believe that collaboration is the key. We won’t proofread your paper, but we will help you think critically about your own writing and hopefully give suggestions to make it stronger.” (Writing Center website)

Everyone can benefit from having others read their writing. Everyone. Whether you feel you are an excellent or a struggling writer, the Writing Center can help! The Writing Center is located in 402 Neville Hall (www.umaine.edu/wcenter, 581-3828.)

Please understand that a peer tutor in the writing center will not serve as your private editor. Tutors help with discussing overall format, a general outline, or small (5-page) sections at a time. They can’t help you with revising the entire finished product.

- **Collaborative Media Lab**
The Collaborative Media Lab has a host of hardware (computers, color laser and large format printers, a slide shooter, scanners, digital cameras, high-speed video conferencing, etc.) and software that might help with thesis research, construction, and presentation. They are located in Fogler Library. To use their equipment, you must call for an appointment; the number is 581-4641.

- **Fogler Library**
  Of course the library has journals and monographs that will likely be of use to you during your thesis work. But did you know that there is a “contact” librarian assigned to each department? It’s true! You can find the librarian who is “up on” your discipline at library.umaine.edu/colldev/contacts.htm. These folks are fantastic at pointing students in the right direction. They can find anything!

- **The Honors Thesis Archives**
  In the Class of 1955 Thesis/Reading Room and the Mel Gershman Seminar Room at Honors Center you can find over 1300 Honors Theses written at the University of Maine since 1937! Students find that looking at earlier theses in their discipline provides a great deal of insight into the process! To search our Thesis Archives, visit: honors.umaine.edu/academics/thesis/search/.
IV. The Joy of Texts: Reading Lists

What is this Reading List?
The reading list is a unique aspect of our thesis process. We believe it distinguishes the Honors College at the University of Maine from other Honors programs and colleges. It also differentiates our defenses from master’s or doctoral defenses. It is our view that Honors students should not only excel in their classes and produce independent scholarship in their chosen disciplines, but, as we are awarding an undergraduate Honors degree, they should have a strong foundation across the breadth of the academic spectrum.

Your reading list should be made up of some twelve to fifteen titles which have played a significant role in your academic development. One or two films, musical compositions, or works of art can be included. Your reading list should include titles that are reflective of your undergraduate years: from Honors courses, from other courses, or from your private experience. As a former Honors College Associate put it, “Your reading list should draw a picture of you as an undergraduate.”

Your reading list must be annotated. In addition to the title of the work and the name of its creator, you should provide a short text briefly describing the work (other than works which will be known to everyone) and some discussion of its importance to you. Alternatively a several page essay describing the works through a narrative would serve the same purpose and allow you to integrate the works more completely. Regardless of format, the annotation should provide an entrée into the works for your committee.

Your reading list, Thesis Form Reading List, signed by your advisor and the dean, is due by the tenth week of the HON499 semester. You should provide a copy of the reading list to your committee members with the final version of your thesis.

What sort of things should go on the reading list?
Choose books and other texts about which you are passionate and which truly were important to your academic development. Do not try to impress your thesis committee with a long list of “classics” or “great books.” What is most important is that you are connected to these texts, positively or negatively. We certainly hope for more of the former. An authentic conversation about “your” texts will be more engaging than a lecture on the merit of great works.
What if the committee isn’t familiar with all the texts?
As it turns out, almost always some committee members are familiar with some of the texts on the reading list. In addition, some of the most interesting conversations occur when committee members learn about texts with which they weren’t formerly acquainted.

Should I choose books that I used in my Honors thesis?
In general, no. Your reading list should not include works directly related to your thesis. Certainly there might be a text or two that piqued your curiosity or prompted you to study in your chosen field. The idea behind the reading list is to provide an opportunity to explore the breadth of your education, rather than the depth demonstrated with your thesis.

Can I include texts I read (or heard or …) before college?
Yes, but such works should not dominate, nor even compose a large percentage of, your reading list. However, there is likely to be a text or two that contributed greatly to your intellectual development that you read before coming to the University of Maine.

Must there be works from Honors on the list?
No. However, if there are no texts from the Honors Civilizations sequence you should expect to be asked “why not?” There may be very good reasons for this, and that is fine. On the other hand, “because I thought everyone else would have those on their lists” is probably not a satisfying answer.

How should I present my reading list?
Many students simply provide their committees with an uncategorized list. Other students group the works on their lists into categories, either thematically or chronologically. You should prepare your annotated reading list in whichever way you feel is most appropriate and provides you with the best opportunity to begin the discussion. Please don’t feel you need to go through your list a text at a time coupled with an associated description and justification—someone will fall asleep!

Can you give me an example of a reading list?
Students often ask that question. Since a reading list is such an idiosyncratic thing, we don’t want to bias your decisions. However, there are some samples at honors.umaine.edu/academics/thesis/reading-lists/; Appendix C is a hypothetical list: what the dean’s reading list might have been more than thirty years ago when he graduated from college.
V. Writing the Thesis

How do I write a thesis? Isn’t it overwhelming?
The glib answer would be “one page at a time.” The real answer is “one page at a time.” Writing a thesis requires planning wisely and the commitment of sufficient time. As a three-credit course each semester, you should be devoting on the order of 10 hours per week (including meetings, research, etc.) to your thesis. [This may be the most important line in this entire book; did you hear it the first time!?] Read, and take to heart, Lauren Marshall’s Tips for Sustained Writing Projects in the following section. Please realize that you will have to do several revisions with your advisor – no one writes a thesis in one draft.

What is the audience for my thesis? To whom am I writing?
This is a complicated question, without a universal answer. Talk about this with your advisor. Some advisors have strong feelings here; follow their recommendations unless you have compelling reasons not to. The dean of the Honors College has an opinion, too. He believes you should write your thesis as if it will be read—and understood—by other academically talented senior students in your discipline, regardless of whether they’ve worked on the same project. That is, it shouldn’t be written for experts, nor should it be written for novices. It is probably fair to assume your reader knows what you learned in your college classes, but not the knowledge you acquired working on your thesis.

Is there a special format for the thesis?
Yes and no. Much of the format of the thesis is up to the student, in consultation with her/his advisor. Honors College requirements are in the Thesis Formatting Guide which can be found in Appendix D.

Should/can I copyright my thesis?
You have full rights as an author as soon as you create your work; there is no need for registration. To specify your rights, include a copyright notice on the page immediately following your title page. See Appendix D.

What if my thesis is written in a foreign language?
This is required for certain majors to satisfy the capstone experience. The title page should be in English, except that the title appears first in the foreign language, followed by an English translation. The Table of Contents and the Author’s Biography should also have English translations.
Tips for Sustained Writing Projects
(like an Honors Thesis)

1. **Take careful notes**
   If you’re planning to spend the first few months of your thesis work researching or collecting data, don’t count on your memory to keep all that information handy when it comes time to write up your results and conclusions. Take careful notes: mark down all of the necessary information, including page numbers, author’s name, the date you accessed a website, etc. If a brilliant idea comes to you that might be helpful during the writing process, write it down.

2. **Make a writing plan**
   Not everyone uses outlines when they write, but for longer papers, some kind of sketch of the overall layout of your paper can save you time in the revision process—remember, it’s much easier to restructure an outline than an entire 60-page paper. Outlines can also provide momentum for your writing; once you complete an item on your outline, you’ll already know what to work on next. Outlines do not need to be formal or very detailed to be effective. (Be sure to consult with your advisor on this!)

3. **Start anywhere, anytime**
   Even though your readers will start at the introduction, who says the writer has to? If you are struggling to get that first sentence of your introduction written, try starting somewhere else in your paper, where you feel the most confident about what you have to say. (This is where your outline comes in handy.) You also don’t need to wait until you’ve read every single book in the library on your subject before you start writing—if you have enough information for a chapter, why not get started on it now? You can always add new ideas later on. Just make sure that you revise your complete draft to make sure all of the pieces you’ve written transition into one another, so your writing is smooth and seamless from start to finish.

4. **Talk about your project**
   Drive your committee, friends, family members, pets, professors, classmates, and anyone else you meet crazy by discussing your writing with them. The more you explain your project to others, the clearer it will be for you, and the easier it will be to write about. Meet with your advisor regularly during the writing process to talk about passages you’ve written; you may not realize your errors until you’ve had the
opportunity to really talk about your writing with a critical audience. Some students even read their writing out loud to themselves to catch any missing words or awkwardness during the proofreading stage.

5. **Don’t let writer’s block shut you down**

We all get it, and it can be difficult to overcome, but you should never let writer’s block derail you for long. There are a variety of causes for writer’s block, ranging from boredom to anxiety, and there are different strategies for each cause. (Note that writer’s block and procrastination are not the same thing!) First, think about why you’re having trouble: are you setting your standards too high to get something on paper, or are you simply bored with your thesis? If you are having trouble getting started, here are a few things you can do to get you “unstuck”:

- **Freewriting:** this means turning off your internal editor and just writing whatever comes to your mind, even if it’s ridiculous; sometimes writers block themselves by having an overactive internal editor—don’t expect yourself to choose the perfect word or phrase every time you write. Just worry about getting your point across first, and then go back and polish it later.

- **Talking:** if you’re unsure of the direction your project is taking, talk to your advisor or someone who can help you find footing to get started.

- **Start somewhere else:** find yourself struggling to write chapter 2 because you keep thinking about what needs to happen in chapter 3? Write chapter 3 first!

- **Get organized:** This can mean two things; if you haven’t planned a clear outline, you may need to write one (or develop the one you have) to give yourself a better picture of what your prose should discuss. The second organization problem may be outside your writing—if you keep checking email, chatting with friends, answering your cell phone, watching TV, or singing to music, you probably are setting yourself up for some serious interference. Create an environment that allows you to focus without stress-inducing interruptions. (Note: this does not mean redecorating your entire living space to make it feng shui—that’s called procrastination!)
6. **Don’t let procrastination prevent your success**

If you’re a procrastinator when it comes to writing, relax: you’re normal. But that doesn’t mean you shouldn’t try to overcome the tendency to procrastinate when there is a deadline to meet. Long-term projects can be especially dangerous for procrastinators, since the illusion of “lots of time” can fool you. To avoid that awful day when you realize that your 80-page paper is due in a week, and you haven’t even started it yet, start scheduling appointments with your writing project. Figure out what time of day you work best: in the morning after your first cup of coffee? At 1:00 am when your roommate is asleep? The two hours before dinner? Once you’ve identified your peak productivity time, make the effort to keep that block of time free of other activities so you can work regularly—when it becomes a habit, you’ll be less likely to procrastinate. Also, be honest with yourself; procrastinators are really good at rationalization—be willing to identify the difference between real excuses (“I can’t write when I have to go to class”) and procrastination excuses (“I can’t write when it’s sunny outside”). Once you’ve done what you can to motivate yourself, tell your friends and family about your goals. If you have a friend who often says, “Come on, you can work on it after we go to the movies,” you may want to tell them about how important your project is and how susceptible you are to distractions. You may find that your friends will encourage you to keep going once they understand your challenge. (Even if they still try to distract you, it’s always a good idea to learn how to say no.) Although you clearly can’t spend all of your time writing, don’t let distractions prevent you from even getting started.

7. **Keep going!**

The writing process can stall or become stale if you don’t work at it consistently. Plan regular writing sessions so that you don’t waste time trying to regroup each time you return to your project. If you work at your writing project consistently, you should resist the urge to reread everything that you had written previously before writing something new; as long as you catch any inconsistencies or transition problems in the revision process, pushing forward every time you sit down to write will save you time and keep you on schedule. You should also try to fight the urge to do research during the writing phase; if you come to the point in a paragraph where you think you’ll need to do some further reading, make a note to explore that problem later and press on. Think of how long it would take to write if you stopped to read or look up words every few sentences!
8. **Budget time for final revision**  
Very few writers (even professional writers) get it right on the first pass, especially in a long-term project. Always leave plenty of time for you to discuss a complete first draft with your advisor and to make any necessary revisions. Revision doesn’t just include proofreading; it could also mean adding or deleting entire sections of your paper, so be sure to prevent some serious stress by giving yourself plenty of time for major revisions.

9. **Get a writer’s guide and use it**  
Something about academic writing makes writers forget everything they learned about grammar, style, and documentation format. Make sure your writing is professional and polished by looking up the correct way to document your sources, punctuate quotations, or use words. To prevent interruptions to your writing momentum, highlight areas that you aren’t sure you’ve written correctly and check them after you’ve finished writing that particular passage. Better yet, brush up on your documentation format (such as APA, MLA, etc.) before you start writing.

10. **Save your work in three different places (paranoia can be a good thing)**  
You finish your final draft, you are just about to click “Print,” when your computer crashes. In addition to saving your file to a hard drive, create occasional backup files saved off your computer (burned to a CD, for instance) and print hard copies every once in a while. To be extra safe, keep some version of your thesis in a completely different location from your computer; in the unlikely (but always possible) instance that fire or other disaster occurs, you’ll still have a backup file available. As you revise and make major changes, always save new versions of your work as separate files—don’t totally replace older versions, just in case you decide to switch back or borrow passages from previous edits.

[Lauren Marshall graduated from the University of Maine with a B.A. in English in 2004. Her Honors thesis was entitled *To Dream the Rest: A Novel*. She completed her M.A. in English in 2006 and was an Honors College Associate the following academic year. She is currently working on her Ph.D. in composition and rhetoric at the University of Illinois.]
VI. Problems?
[Don’t panic – the problems described here happen to a very small number of our thesis students. That said, we need to mention them.]

**What if I’m not getting along with my advisor?**
That’s a good question. It happens – not very often, but it does happen. Sometimes it’s simply due to miscommunication and sometimes it’s something more fundamental. Try to have a discussion with your advisor about your concerns and what you see as the problem. It is important to do this promptly and it should by all means be done face-to-face, not via email. If there are still unresolved concerns, make an appointment to talk with the dean. In these situations, the dean is the best person to help try to resolve the problem.

**Can I replace a committee member?**
Yes, but you should think about this carefully before proceeding.

Sometimes a committee member will ask to leave the committee – for whatever reason – in that case, it’s easy. Simply discuss an appropriate replacement with your advisor and make an appointment to see the replacement. You’ll want to get the new committee member up to speed with your project and progress as soon as possible. If this happens very late in the thesis process, you may want to discuss the situation with the dean. On some occasions, you may be cleared to complete the thesis experience with a four-member committee.

Other times there is a conflict between a committee member and the thesis student or perhaps between two committee members. In this situation, you need to decide whether the battle is worth fighting. It is probably best to talk this over with your advisor and perhaps with the dean and your advisor jointly. If the decision is to replace the committee member, you, your advisor, and the dean can determine the most appropriate way to proceed.

**What if I decide not to complete the thesis work?**
We certainly hope this never happens! If it is impossible to complete your thesis, you need to immediately notify the Honors College. If you decide to discontinue your thesis and have received a “TH” for Honors 498 or 499, you will need to have that grade converted into a letter grade by your advisor. Of course, the standard timetable for dropping courses applies to 498 and 499, too.
What if I was doing the thesis as an alternative capstone and I don’t finish the thesis, don’t defend the thesis, or don’t receive honors, does it still count?

This is a question for your major department or college. Typically, it is up to your advisor to determine whether you’ve done enough work and done it well enough to waive the capstone requirement. We’ve seen a number of situations where the work done in a semester or so on the thesis was considered sufficient for the capstone even if the thesis was not completed. Perhaps your advisor will require some sort of paper or presentation. But it is important to realize that the recognition of the capstone lies with the unit that is certifying your degree.

Space for writing down more problems....
VII. The Best Defense is...

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

Working with your advisor and coordinating with the other members of your committee, you need to determine a date and time for the thesis defense (don’t forget MeetingWizard and Doodle!). Please schedule the defense to take place during or before the last week of classes. This will allow you time to make any revisions suggested by the committee at the defense. You are also responsible for finding an appropriate place for the defense; if you want to have it in the Honors Center, please check with Deborah (581-3263 or Deborah Small on First Class) to reserve a room.

A fair number of students actually hold their defenses during exam week. While this is not ideal, it may make scheduling the defense a bit easier. If you think this might be an option for you, talk it over with your advisor and, please, avoid that Friday (Honors Celebration!).

It is important that you try to get your defense scheduled as early in the semester as possible! Faculty calendars generally fill up and become more difficult to coordinate as the semester wears on, so try to make your life easier by scheduling when their calendars are at their lightest. **Be sure to schedule two and a half hours for your defense to allow plenty of time for the committee to deliberate!** You worked hard all year; make sure they have enough time to give you careful consideration and to discuss the thesis with you when you come back into the room.

The time, date, and place of the defense should be entered on the *Thesis Form* **Defense Schedule** which you should then have signed by your advisor and the dean of the Honors College and delivered to the Honors Center no later than two weeks before the defense. If you do not meet this deadline, you may have to reschedule your defense. By signing this form your advisor gives you the go-ahead to complete the thesis and sit for the defense.

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

One of the best ways to get ready is to do a trial run! You might consider participating in the Honors Symposium which is part of Student Research and Creative Achievement Week every year in the middle of April. Here, along with your Honors peers, you will have the opportunity to deliver a fifteen minute presentation on your thesis work and field questions from the audience. This is a great way to practice for the real thing!
Another idea is to think about which of your professors was the most effective at communicating information in class. You might try to emulate this professor and even ask if the two of you can sit down and talk about tips for presentation. I guarantee s/he will be flattered!

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

Your most important task is to provide a final, thoroughly edited version of your thesis (along with your annotated reading list) to each member of your committee at least two weeks prior to the scheduled defense. **Theses submitted without proper editing or less than one week prior to the scheduled defense will require a rescheduling of the defense.** You should also confirm that any equipment (overhead or computer projectors, screens, computers) that you need are available for the defense. We have most of that at the Honors Center if you hold your defense here.

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

Master’s and doctoral defenses are usually advertised and open to the public. We try not to raise the anxiety levels of our students; our defenses are not advertised. However, with your advisor’s consent, you can open your defense to anyone (an “open” defense) or to selected individuals: family, friends, class- or lab-mates. As with any such decision, you may want to think about how observers affect the experiment and what sensitivity, if any, they may have to your material or presentation. You certainly want to talk this over with your advisor. You should make it clear to visitors what role, if any, they may play in the defense: whether they are permitted to ask questions at all, whether they have to wait until the committee is through asking questions, and when they have to leave. Of course, they will have to leave during the committee’s deliberations.

If you are having an open defense, let the Associates know. Often students who will eventually complete a thesis are interested in seeing what a defense looks like, and the Associates can get the word out.

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

Thesis defenses last approximately two hours. The first hour is devoted to your thesis work. Usually you will be asked to present a summary of your thesis for ten to twenty minutes, after which the committee will engage you in a question and answer session. During this discussion, as well as after the defense, suggestions for revisions may be made. The specific format is something you should talk over with your advisor.
Following a short break for everyone to relax a bit, the second hour of the defense is devoted to a conversation about your reading list. You should be prepared to communicate how these texts were significant in your undergraduate education and your intellectual development. Since some of your committee will not be familiar with some of the texts, you should be able to convey a sense of the importance of these works. Be prepared for this conversation to go far afield of the actually texts; your committee members will want to know how you make connections and how you push the envelope of your education. You should also not worry if not all the works on your list are directly addressed during the discussion. This is fairly common as the conversation tends to form itself around certain issues and texts.

**How should I conduct the defense?**

This is a good discussion to have with your thesis advisor. A few questions to think about:

- Do you want your advisor to introduce you?
- Do you want to take questions during your presentation or wait until it’s over? (Don’t forget to tell your audience what you have decided right at the beginning!)
- Do you want to take a break between the thesis portion and the reading list discussion? Don’t leave this decision to your committee.
- How do you want to introduce the texts on your reading list – all at once, one at a time, or not at all?

**What are “tips” for a successful defense?**

Every defense is different, as are theses and thesis committees. However, here are some ideas that you might want to consider:

- Most students use PowerPoint to present their thesis. It’s not a requirement, but you might want to consider it.
- Regardless of what method you choose for presentation, **practice**! In many cases, your advisor would be glad to sit down with you and listen to your presentation, providing some suggestions. You might also try it out on friends and fellow thesis-writers. (The Thesis Symposium in April is a great chance to practice!)
• Think about how you will be most comfortable in both the thesis and the reading-list portions of the defense.
• Yes, often students bring refreshments for the committee (and audience). Will they love you for it? Yes! Will they hold it against you if you don’t? No!!
• Don’t forget to bring *Thesis Form & Honors Recommendation* to the defense!

**What happens after we finish with the reading list?**
When the discussion of your reading list concludes, you will be asked to leave the room. (Is that ominous or what?) Don’t fret, don’t go far, and don’t make promises you don’t want to keep. Allow at least 15 minutes for the discussion to take place—that’s why you scheduled a 2.5 hour block of time! If someone hasn’t come to get you after 30 minutes, the committee has likely started to debate the future of the University or the universe. Don’t worry; they’ll eventually remember why they are there!

**What are they doing in there when I leave?**
At this time your advisor will facilitate the committee’s deliberations as to the level of Honors you will be accorded. The possibilities are

• No Honors
• Honors
• High Honors
• Highest Honors

The committee makes this determination taking into consideration the thesis/project as well as its presentation and your discussion, the reading list and its conversation. They will record their decision on your *Thesis Form & Honors Recommendation* *(you remembered to bring it, right?)* and invite you back into the room for the good news! This form should be submitted by your advisor to the Center; the dean of the Honors College will then sign off on it after checking that you’ve met all your Honors requirements.

**Time to take a deep breath!!!**
**What do these various levels of Honors mean?**

That’s a fair question, though it’s a difficult one to answer. *Receiving “Honors” is, in a word, an honor!* Very few students, on the order of 5% of the University’s graduating class, receive any level of Honors. “High Honors” and “Highest Honors” are reserved for students who go well above and beyond what is expected of our graduating students writing Honors theses. If you work and communicate with your advisor, meet the expectations set out by you, your advisor, and your committee, and finish the process, you shouldn’t have to worry about that “No Honors” thing.

Making this decision is usually very difficult for the committee. Balancing appropriate rewards for the student and being equitable to all students in Honors is a difficult and serious task. One way to think about this: Successful completion of the tasks set out in the Thesis Proposal merits at least Honors. Exhibiting a deep connection with your subject coupled with communicating that internalization might be High Honors, while Highest Honors would necessitate a substantial demonstration of originality. But remember this: a very small fraction of the graduating class receives any of these levels of distinction!

A further discussion of this question which may be of particular interest to advisors is incorporated in “Instructions to the Jury” which can be found in Appendix G.

**What is this about revisions? You mean I’m not done?**

Bad news: a thesis is never done! No, seriously, almost every thesis requires some amount of revision before the final version is accepted. In the vast majority of cases, this is nothing more than minor, word-processing changes. In a small number of situations, it might entail more serious changes and revisions.

**How long do I have to get my final revisions in?**

We (the Honors College) have to get the information to student records before they finalize graduation degree materials; this is typically a month or so after the end of the previous semester. You must have your approved (see below) thesis to us by then. The specific date changes each semester, but we will make it known as soon as we know it. We encourage anyone who is going on vacation or starting a job immediately to get the final version in as soon as possible! If you’re hanging around, you probably have at least a few weeks after graduation to get it in. **As always, the sooner, the better!**
And the final submission?
After making the revisions, if any, required by your committee you must submit a copy (paper or electronic – ask your advisor!) of your post-defense thesis to your advisor who will sign off on Thesis Form Final Acceptance (the last one!) and forward the form to the Honors Center. At this point, you should transmit an electronic version of your thesis to the Honors College. If it is small enough to email, you may send it to one of the Honors College Associates; otherwise, you should submit it on CD or DVD. NOTE: Manuscripts that do not fully comply with the honors formatting guidelines will not be accepted. After receiving the signed Final Acceptance form and the electronic copy of your thesis and checking your academic record, the dean of the Honors College will sign the form and transmit the information to the Office of Student Records where the appropriate level of Honors will be recorded on your diploma and transcript (along with the title of your thesis). How cool is that!?

Can I order bound copies for myself or others?
Of course! Once Thesis Form is in, you can submit your request at honors.umaine.edu/formsguides/bound-thesis-request-form/. Currently, bound copies cost $15 if they will be picked up at the Center (or delivered via intra-campus mail) and $20 if they are to be mailed. Payment is required before they are printed and bound; checks should be made out to the University of Maine.

How do I make my thesis available on-line?
Through Fogler Library, the Digital Commons houses electronic versions of many of our Honors theses that can be accessed through URSUS searches as well as GoogleScholar. To fill out the necessary permissions go to honors.umaine.edu/ets/.

What about grading?
Your advisor assigns letter grades for HON498 and HON499. These grades reflect the work done on your thesis in the corresponding semester, and they are determined solely by your advisor, based on the thesis work itself. This is different from the level of honors which is determined by the entire thesis committee and includes, in addition to an assessment of the thesis, evaluation of the oral defense and the reading list.

In many cases, students receive a “TH” grade for HON498. This is a deferred grade that usually, though not always, is replaced by the grade given in HON499. However, some faculty advisors may choose to either
grade HON498 when it is completed or may choose to replace the TH by a grade different than the one given for HON499.

And then you’re DONE!!!!

VIII. Rubrics? We don’t need no stinkin’ rubrics!

What are these rubrics that my advisor mentioned?
The Honors College has developed three rubrics, one each for the Written Thesis, the Thesis and Reading List Oral Defense, and the Thesis Advisor’s Assessment. A rubric, if you are unfamiliar with the term in this setting (the term originally referred to something printed in red), is best described as a guideline for assessing a project (such as a thesis and its defense).

These three rubrics will be used by advisors and committees to help them judge your thesis. While they are not required, we hope all committees choose to use them. You should discuss this with your advisor so you know what the plan will be for your work.

What is the purpose of these rubrics? How do they help?
The most obvious answer is that they help the members of your committee evaluate your work in the various facets of the thesis and the defense. That’s important because it will help standardize the assessments of all Honors theses and “put everyone on the same page.” The rubrics will also help the members of the committee identify specific strengths and areas of challenge in your work during the deliberations following the defense.

Most importantly, we believe these rubrics will help you and your peers understand what the expectations are for the thesis and the defense. This is tremendously important as it is not fair to you to be judged without letting you know on what basis those decisions are made. This is truly the purpose of these rubrics.

Can I see the rubrics?
Of course! Appendix H contains a condensed version of each of the rubrics. The entire forms can be obtained from the Honors College office. They are posted at honors.umaine.edu/academics/thesis/forms/.
Appendix A: Thesis as Capstone (as of January 2012)

Majors Accepting the Honors Thesis as Capstone

- Anthropology
- Aquaculture
- Art History
- Biochemistry
- Biology
- Botany
- Business (all concentrations)
- Cellular & Molecular Biology
- Chemistry
- Communication
- Computer Engineering
- Computer Science
- Earth Sciences
- Ecology & Environmental Sciences
- Economics
- Electrical Engineering
- Engineering Physics
- English
- Financial Economics
- French
- German
- Interdisciplinary B.A.
- International Affairs (concentrations other than History and Women’s Studies)
- Journalism
- Latin
- Marine Science
- Mass Communication
- Mathematics & Statistics
- Microbiology
- Modern Languages
- Music (B.A. degree only)
- New Media
- Physics & Astronomy
- Political Science
- Psychology
- Romance Languages
- Sociology
- Spanish
- Theatre
- Zoology

Majors Offering Departmental Elective Waivers for Thesis Work

These majors accept a completed Honors Thesis, in the major or a closely related area and with a faculty member from the department as advisor, to substitute for required departmental or technical electives.

- Biological Engineering
- Chemical Engineering
- Civil and Environmental Engineering
- Construction Management Technology
- Elementary Education
- Mechanical Engineering
- Surveying Engineering Technology

Please check honors.umaine.edu/academics/thesis/capstone/ for updates and for additional information.
Appendix B: Sample Committee Meeting Agenda

Thesis Committee Meeting

Date:
Time:
Location:

AGENDA

I. Thesis & Research (15 minutes)
   A. Current state of research
   B. Review prospectus
      1. Topics
      2. Expectations
      3. Sources
   C. Comments/Questions/Suggestions

II. Defense Structure (15 minutes)
    A. Thesis
       1. Presentation
       2. Discussion/questions
    B. Reading list discussion
    C. Decision on level of honors

III. Proposed Timetable (15 minutes)
    A. Copies of thesis to committee date
    B. Tentative defense date/time

IV. Items Arising
Appendix C: Charlie’s Reading List

(Imaginary) Honors Reading List
Charles P. Slavin ’76

Some Conclusions Extending Domains of Analyticity
via the n-Dimensional Fourier Transform

- **Structure of Scientific Revolutions** (Thomas Kuhn)
  This is Kuhn’s analysis of the history of science moving from one paradigm to the next, from one practice of “normal science” to the next: through crises and “revolutions.” *Structure* introduced “paradigm” and “paradigm shift” into everyday vocabulary. One of the defining books of my undergraduate education – I read it in at least three courses. I find Kuhn’s views of the progress of science and the inevitability of that progress compelling. I wish I had been able to take a course with him.

- **Moby Dick** (Herman Melville)
  A story about a big fish, a big white fish. I never thought I would be interested in reading this book. However, Bill Howarth’s *American Renaissance Literature* course – which I took this year – was a highlight of my education, even if the grade I received (damn English majors!) wasn’t. Sitting around a room talking about *Moby Dick* was an unexpected treasure of my time here – even while the course was going on, I kept reflecting on how surprised I was that it was all so interesting! Shows you how warped mathematics majors are.

- **Classical Electromagnetic Radiation** (Jerry Marion)
  A textbook that taught me a fair amount about electricity and magnetism, but much more about myself. The book that finalized my decision to be a math, not physics, major. Sophomore year, Honors Electromagnetism, Jerry Marion’s book, *Classical Electromagnetic Radiation*, skin depth. UGH. I took one look at that differential equation, and I ran over to Fine Hall to sign up as a math major! It’s important to note that the book was good, I learned a great deal in the course, and Professor “Stew” Smith was tremendous. I simply never had the passion for physics I did for math, nor the physical intuition needed to be a physicist – this book just pushed me over the edge.

- **Fourier Series and Integrals** (Harry Dym & Henry P. McKean)
  The textbook I used in my first course on Fourier analysis, taught by Professor Dan Burns. Dan really has been my mentor, and I was bummed this year when he was not here to direct my thesis. This book is difficult,
but the authors do a fine job providing interesting exercises and examples. It’s one of the reasons why I’m going to Wisconsin next year to study harmonic analysis.

- **Edge of Objectivity** (Charles C. Gillispie)
  Another book that opened up the history of science for me. I’m not sure, but I also think this is the only – maybe one by Carl Hempel – book I read in a course taught by the author. His views seem to be quite the opposite of Kuhn’s, but I found his arguments, in the text and in class, pretty convincing. This book was, in something of the same way that the two books from *American Renaissance Literature* were, a marker of my learning to take academic challenges. The opportunity to take a graduate course was exciting and scary for me, but it gave me confidence that I could understand what was going on at that level.

- **Rascal** (Sterling North)
  I didn’t read this book in college. I think I was nine or ten when I read it with my father. It is the story of a young boy, his father, and, particularly, a raccoon. I remember the reading of the book much more than I do the book’s content. It was particularly important to me during my college years as my father died when I was a sophomore, and he had been so instrumental in my academic life before that. I always credit (when credit is appropriate) my ability to write fairly well to his working with me on my writing in high school. He probably read every essay I wrote, and I would be cringing in another room, afraid what criticisms he would have. But it helped, without question.

- **Leaves of Grass** (Walt Whitman)
  Another text from *American Renaissance Literature*; another text I never thought I would read. I found the material in this course challenging, but being exposed to Whitman’s poetry through discussions with Howarth, graduate students, and upper-level English majors was a great experience for a budding mathematician. Whitman’s poetry was eye-opening to me, and I felt a real affinity, perhaps because we share a birthday.

- **A Sense of Where You Are & Pieces of the Frame** (John McPhee)
  I’m a die-hard McPhee fan, and it started with *A Sense of Where You Are* (about Bill Bradley’s basketball career at Princeton) which I read – I have no idea why – long before I thought about coming to Princeton. It is also McPhee’s first book. *Pieces of the Frame* I read when it first appeared last year. It is a compilation of McPhee’s pieces, published over the last few years, primarily in *The New Yorker*. My favorite is the first one in the
anthology, “Travels in Georgia,” which tells the story of roadkill in Georgia, more or less. But they’re all fascinating. And now this year, one of my greatest regrets is that I didn’t even make an effort to enroll in McPhee’s “Literature of Fact” course this semester.

- **Alice in Wonderland** (Lewis Carroll)
  A book I didn’t read until I was here. On the other hand, C.L. Dodgson (Lewis Carroll was a pseudonym) was a mathematician who produced a number of books of logical puzzles and symbolic logic – I devoured them in high school. So, needless to say, when I read Alice I was expecting, well, I’m not sure what I was expecting. The juxtaposition of austere mathematical logic with the upside-down, inside-out world of Alice and her acquaintances is wild. The book also represents some of my connections with my friends as an undergraduate.

- **The Mote in God’s Eye** (Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle)
  Classic, “hard” science fiction – more science than in fantasy. I devoured this stuff from the time I could first read “chapter books.” This novel is about humanity’s first contact with a complex, alien civilization, the Moties. Throughout most of high school, and before, I wanted to be an aeronautical engineer. During high school, I worked one summer for Grumman Aerospace on a space telescope. This was the stuff of my dreams. Somewhere along the way, I decided that science and mathematics were more fun – I’m not quite sure how/when that happened. My taste in science fiction moved toward more involved, more socially constructed texts: LeGuin, Delaney, and Zelazny.

- **“Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid”** (George Roy Hill)
  This movie, starring Paul Newman and Robert Redford, is the one my four roommates and I went to see every year. That it is about two guys being great friends may or may not have anything to do with that – it’s also a great piece of fun, escapist entertainment. Even if you’ve seen it a number of times and know all about Bolivia and the ending.

- **“Tapestry”** (Carole King)
  This album, released my senior year in high school, spoke to me both that year and early in my college years. Interestingly enough, it was also a favorite of my roommate who is from Cheyenne, Wyoming (I grew up in New York)! This is King’s first album as a “singer-songwriter” having written many hits for other performers previously. Many of the songs, even if written from a female perspective, spoke volumes to me from the first time I heard them.
"As for Thesis, in Greek mythology she was involved in a cosmic struggle with the male God Antithesis, of which a child, Synthesis, was the outcome. Her divine attributes/symbols are a research paper (right hand) and a laptop (left hand). In contrast to Justitia, she is not blindfolded, but wearing glasses (representing myopia from extensive reading)." --Klaas Voss

* Thesis Drawing by Nate Wiley 2008

The purpose of this manual is to aid students writing an Honors thesis with the more mundane details of thesis formatting. Honors theses are written in a variety of disciplines and, therefore, the Honors College does not prescribe a particular style, as long as the style used is appropriate to the student’s field of study. Yet, it is the goal of the Honors Staff to create a small measure of uniformity amongst theses by requiring the same basic formatting. The Honors College is concerned with the organization, neatness, mechanical correctness and consistency of all final thesis submissions. It is the responsibility of all students to read the guidelines carefully and meet the requirements fully. As with all other aspects of the thesis process, students are invited to approach any of the staff with questions or problems.

**Manuscripts that do not fully comply with the guidelines will NOT be accepted.**

**Submitting Your Thesis**

It is the preference of the Honors College that your final thesis is submitted as one Word document (not a PDF). If the submitted thesis is in another format or requires different software to edit, the Honors College staff will not be able to perform any editing or minor repairs. If the submitted thesis contains formatting errors, it will be sent back to you for corrections. Only after corrections are made will Thesis Form #6 be approved.
# ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

(must appear in the following order)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preliminary Pages</th>
<th>Body Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title Page</strong></td>
<td><strong>Text of manuscript</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>number NOT typed on page</td>
<td>Arabic numerals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page is counted.</td>
<td>Page is counted, number typed on page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Copyright Page</strong></td>
<td><strong>Bibliography</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Optional)</td>
<td>Arabic numerals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>number NOT typed on page</td>
<td>Page is counted, number typed on page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page is counted. Continue numbering ...</td>
<td>Continue numbering from previous section.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Abstract</strong></td>
<td><strong>Appendix(ces) (If any)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>number NOT typed on page</td>
<td>Arabic numerals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page is counted. Continue numbering ...</td>
<td>Page is counted, number typed on page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dedication</strong> (Optional)</td>
<td>Continue numbering from previous section.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lower case Roman numeral</td>
<td><strong>Author’s Biography</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page is counted, number typed on page.</td>
<td>Arabic numerals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication (Optional)</td>
<td>Page is counted, number typed on page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lower case Roman numeral</td>
<td>Continue numbering from previous section.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements (Optional)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lower case Roman numeral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page is counted, number typed on page.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue numbering from previous section.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preface or Foreword</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Optional)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lower case Roman numeral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page is counted, number typed on page.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue numbering from previous section.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Table of Contents</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lower case Roman numeral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page is counted, number typed on page.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue numbering from previous section.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>List of Figures, Tables Definitions (If any)</strong></td>
<td>Page is counted, number typed on page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lower case Roman numeral</td>
<td>Continue numbering from previous section.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Body Pages</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Text of manuscript</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic numerals</td>
<td>Must begin with page 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bibliography</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic numerals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appendix(ces) (If any)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic numerals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Author’s Biography</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic numerals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Reading List is not included with the final thesis copy.**

46
FORMATTING THE THESIS

Page Format
All theses are printed on 8.5x11 inch paper and bound for display in the Thesis Reading Room and Gershman Seminar Room in Colvin Hall. Therefore, all pages in the submitted final thesis are single-sided. If you would like to include a CD, DVD or alternatively bound copy of your thesis project, consult with a member of the Honors staff.

Type Style
All final theses are submitted in 12 point Times New Roman font. This includes the thesis text, preliminary pages (title page, abstract, etc.), page numbers, charts, figures, graphs, tables, and appendix text. Exceptions: Captions, footnotes, and endnotes use 10 point Times New Roman font. Text in the appendix from another source (reprint of government documents, letter of consent, etc) may be in another font.

Margins
Margin size is crucial to ensure proper binding. Margins are 1.5” on the left and 1.0” at the bottom, top, and right. All tables and figures comply with the margin widths.

Spacing
The text of the thesis is double-spaced. Footnotes, bibliography (List of References/Works Cited), captions, and the data within tables are single-spaced. Bibliographic entries are separated by a double space. Lengthy descriptions in an appendix may be single-spaced at the author’s discretion. Quotations longer than 4 lines are single-spaced and indented.

The text is formatted to avoid widowed or orphaned lines. A widowed line is a paragraph-ending line that falls at the beginning of the following page, thus separated from the remainder of the text. An orphaned line is a paragraph-opening line that appears by itself at the bottom of a page.

Pagination
Each page of the thesis is single-sided. A page number appears on every page with the exception of the title, abstract, and copyright pages. Page numbers are located only in the upper right or bottom center of each page. Lower case Roman numerals (i, ii, iii,...) are used for the preliminary materials, while Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3,...) are used for the thesis body pages (see table). Page numbers are in 12 point Times New Roman font.
Your name, thesis title or any other information is not included in the header or footer with the page number.

Hint: View pagination as an opportunity to conquer Microsoft Word and master the manipulation of sections. You successfully wrote and defended an Honors thesis; you are smarter than this program! You can find a helpful tutorial at honors.umaine.edu/academics/thesis/forms/ as well as how-to videos on YouTube. If that still doesn’t help, talk with us. We’ve gotten pretty good with this stuff over the years, and maybe we can help. Please don’t leave it until the last second though – some problems take longer to solve than others.

**THESIS CONTENT**

**Title Page (Required)**
A sample of the title page format is included as Appendix E. Even better, we have done all the work for you. You can access a Word template athonors.umaine.edu/files/2009/08/thesis-title-page-template1.doc .

- On the title page, the title of your thesis is printed in all **capital letters** using the same 12 size font as the rest of the thesis. No bold, no italics, no larger font size—just plain, boring caps.
- The date appears as the month and year you intend to graduate. There are three choices for months: May, August or December.
- Before you sit down to create your title page, email your advisor and committee members and ask each of them how they would like their name and title to appear (they must have a title after their name).

*Proceed with caution when including credentials (Dr., Ph.D., MBA, etc.). You don’t want to award someone a doctorate who doesn’t hold that degree or insult one of your committee members by omitting their hard-earned Ph.D. It is the preference of the Honors College staff to omit this information from the thesis title page, for example, Charlie Slavin, Dean of the Honors College. Check with your advisor on this, too.*

Hint: Reasonably accurate titles for all Honors faculty can be found on the Honors College website: http://honors.umaine.edu/people/faculty/
Copyright Page
The copyright page is optional. If it is included, it has only the following text in size 12 Time New Roman font, centered both vertically and horizontally on the page.

© Year Author’s Name
All Rights Reserved

OR

Copyright 2010 Author’s Name

Abstract (Required)
This page, headed by the word Abstract, centered at the top of the page, is a concise summary of the thesis, no more than 250 words, addressing the purpose, scope, organization, methodology, and results. See Appendix F for some samples. If appropriate, your thesis statement and/or hypothesis should be contained in the abstract. For a creative thesis, the abstract might resemble a book blurb from the back cover or a short description of an art show or performance.

List of Figures
If a thesis contains charts, tables, graphs, figures or photographs, all illustrative material is listed in an appropriate List of ___ (Figures, Photographs, Charts, etc.) so labeled at the center of the top of the page.

Footnotes/Endnotes/Chapter Notes
Footnotes, if appropriate to the style manual followed, are placed on the bottom of the page on which the reference is made. The formatting of footnotes follows a standard style manual and consistency is required. Footnote text is 10 point Times New Roman, single-spaced, and adheres to the margin specifications of the thesis.

Notes may also be placed at the end of the thesis (endnotes) or the end of each chapter (chapter notes). If placed at the end of the thesis, endnotes appear before the bibliography. If placed at the end of each chapter, chapter notes start on a new page. Notes are numbered consecutively throughout the thesis or chapter.

Charts, Graphs, Tables and Figures
Illustrative materials may be interspersed throughout the thesis text or contained in an appendix at the discretion of the author. All illustrative
material adheres to the margin and font specifications. Color may be used for illustrative materials in the thesis, but should be used conservatively. Landscape pages may be inserted into the text to accommodate larger tables, but the page numbering location must be consistent.

If a thesis contains charts, graphs, tables or figures a separate list of charts (or graphs or tables or figures) is required and is inserted after the table of contents. Each figure, chart, graph or table is numbered and captioned (captions are 10 point Times New Roman font).

**Photographs**

Color or black and white photographs may be used in the thesis, but should be used conservatively. Like the other illustrative materials, they may be interspersed throughout the thesis text or contained in an appendix at the discretion of the author; please select the most reader-friendly option. Required margins are observed.

If a thesis contains photographs, a separate list of photographs is required and is placed after the table of contents. All photographs inserted in the thesis have a caption on the same page as the photograph and the caption font is 10 point Times New Roman.

**Bibliography/Works Cited/List of References (Required)**

Every thesis includes a Bibliography/Works Cited/List of References regardless of the citation style used throughout the thesis. The full publication information for all sources cited in the thesis (or for some disciplines, sources that informed the development of your thesis) is included in the Bibliography. The layout and title (Works Cited, References, etc.) of this list will vary by discipline, but the title will appear centered at the top of the page.

Regardless of discipline, entries are single-spaced with a double-space between each entry. The style of the entries follows the style manual appropriate to the author’s discipline.

**Appendices**

If necessary, the appendix or appendices follow the bibliography in the thesis organization. Original data and supplementary materials such as charts, tables, photographs, etc. the author chose not to include in the text of the thesis are included in the appendices. This material may all be included in one appendix (listed in the table of contents as simply
Appendix) or may be organized and divided into two or more appendices. If a thesis contains two or more appendices, they are labeled Appendix A, Appendix B, etc. and listed separately in the table of contents. Appendices may include material that is single-spaced.

Remember, like the vestigial organ it shares a name with, material in the appendix is often unnecessary to the reader. Please select material for the appendix discriminately.

**Human Subjects**

Any University of Maine Honors College student whose research involves the use of human subjects must submit their research protocol to the University of Maine Institutional Review Board (IRB) and receive written approval PRIOR to starting any activities related to human subjects. This includes, but is not limited to, research involving surveys, questionnaires, oral histories, and interviews, whether conducted in person, over the phone, or by mail.

Conducting research involving human subjects without IRB approval is a violation of University policy. Theses involving human subject research will not be accepted by the Honors College without proof of IRB approval. *A copy of the IRB approval letter is included in all thesis copies and is treated as an appendix.* If the thesis has additional appendix material, the IRB letter is a separate appendix.

**Animal Research**

Any University of Maine Honors College student whose research involves the use of vertebrate animals must submit their research protocol to the University of Maine Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) and receive written approval PRIOR to starting any activities related to human subjects.

Conducting research involving vertebrate animals without IACUC approval is a violation of University policy. Theses that involve human subject research will not be accepted by the Honors College without proof of IACUC approval. *A copy of the IACUC approval letter must be included in all thesis copies and should be treated as an appendix.* If the thesis has additional appendix material, the IACUC letter must be a separate appendix.
Author’s Biography (Required)
The author’s biography is an opportunity to share personal information beyond your graduation year and major with readers. These are short, usually no more than two paragraphs and written in the third person. The Author’s Biography includes place of birth, place/date of high school graduation, honor societies, major(s) and minor(s), expected graduation date, and future plans. Here is a sample:

Author’s Biography

Leslie S. Donne was born in Orono, Maine on April 1, 1988. She was raised in Cleveland, Ohio and graduated from Heights High School in 2006. Majoring in anthropology, Leslie has minors in mathematics and education. She is a member of Phi Beta Kappa, Chi Pi Sigma, and Nu Epsilon Eta. She has received a Margaret Chase Smith Scholarship and an Honors College Thesis Fellowship.

Upon graduation, Leslie plans to study on a Fulbright Grant in Sweden before returning to work on an advanced degree in the history and philosophy of science.
Appendix E: Sample Title Page

A STUDY OF THE MEDICAL, SOCIAL, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF WRITING AN HONORS THESIS

by

Leslie S. Donne

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for a Degree with Honors (Anthropology)

The Honors College

University of Maine

May 2019

Advisory Committee:
Kim M. Smith, Professor of Anthropology, Advisor
Terry A. Jones, Associate Professor of Psychology
Lee I. Williams, Assistant Professor of Sociology
Dale N. Ross, Physician, Eastern Maine Medical Center
Tracy E. Brown, Professor of English and Dean, Honors College
Appendix F: Three Sample Abstracts

From a recent civil engineering thesis:
This study tested the model proposed by Kopáček et al. (2005) for predicting hypolimnetic phosphorus release from the sediment of four Maine lakes. Highland Lake is oligotrophic, Joe Pond is dystrophic with low productivity, and Lovejoy Pond and Salmon Pond are eutrophic. According to Kopáček et al.’s model, the labile sediment P is inversely proportional to the sediment molar Al:Fe ratio. When the Al:Fe > 3 or when Al:Fe < 3 but the Al:P > 25, there is low P flux from the sediment. A lake will have high P flux if those conditions are not present in the sediment. The P flux from sediment of each of the four study lakes was explained by the model. However, due to the heterogeneity of the sediment within a lake, the applicability of sediment models to predict P flux is limited. Many sediment samples would have to be collected to accurately characterize the sediment of a lake.

From a recent psychology thesis:
The present study was designed to address prevalence of methylphenidate (i.e. Ritalin) abuse on the University of Maine campus, and to investigate possible psychological factors that may correlate with abuse. These factors included self-esteem, risk and benefit perception, and the nature of the relationship between the user and source of the drug. Ninety students participated via an internet survey. Prevalence for abuse of stimulant medication was 14.4%, but perhaps due to a small sample size, the results from this study are not significant. However, almost all respondents who abuse methylphenidate obtained the drug from a close friend or acquaintance, suggesting that peer influence most likely impacts initial use. Data also suggest that a moderate to severe level of perception of legal and health risk was found in both drug using and non-drug using groups, supporting the notion of the adolescent personal fable. Academic self-esteem was lower in the drug-using group than in the non drug-using group. The fact that there was a substantial difference in the academic category and not the social and physical categories could suggest that either methylphenidate abuse causes low academic self-esteem, that people with low academic self-esteem are more likely to abuse methylphenidate, or that there is a third factor such as defensive pessimism or simply the nature of the degree program the user is in. Overall, the findings of the study suggest that there is a potential problem on campus that should be investigated further.
From a recent art history thesis:
Artist José Gutiérrez Solana came of age as the Spanish empire disintegrated completely and painted his disturbing visions of contemporary Spanish life at the beginning of the 20th century. Along with the writers of the Generation of ’98, Solana depicted a Spain that was backwards and weak, a far cry from its Golden Era. In this paper I examine some of Solana’s works in the context of Spain’s fin-de-siècle crisis along with four centuries worth of literary contributions to the “Black Legend” (la leyenda negra). This historical focus provides a lens through which to better understand Solana’s misinterpreted oeuvre.

Historian Julían Juderías coined the term “Black Legend” in order to refer to anti-Spanish propaganda that began in the 16th century and persisted through the 20th. Through various texts the notion of a simple minded and religiously fanatical Spain came to the fore. Additionally, throughout the 19th century Spain’s neighbors characterized her as a country frighteningly removed from reality, clinging to delusions of empire. With the loss of Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines in 1898 as a result of losing the Spanish-American War, Spaniards were prompted to face the truth. Concerned artists aided in this process with introspective works meant to investigate their situation. Solana was among those artists, exploring contemporary reality through painting.

From a recent English (poetry) thesis:
A collection of free verse, “open composition” poems, Shading Strings primarily explores the theme of grief, and of the resistance and avoidance of dealing with grief, as well as the vocation of poetry itself. Borrowing from Deep Image poet Robert Kelly’s notion of the “dark sound,” feelings of grief become “dark sounds,” vague “percepts” that resonate with the reader. These dark sounds, these “shading strings,” combine harmonically to form the “image of grief.” This journey through grief also parallels the journey into the vocation of poetry, exploring its epistemological range, as well as basic questions on the nature of language.

The collection is divided into three sections. Section one introduces the “dark sound.” Section two explores the materiality of language and poetry, while section three attempts a Hegelian gesture of synthesis of the first two into one long poem, “The Pause,” where grief and writing itself come together to form productive and exciting possibilities.
Appendix G: “Instructions to the Jury”

Preface
Charged by the Honors Council to develop guiding principles to assist Honors College thesis committees in their deliberations following a thesis defense, the following “Instructions to the Jury” were written in Spring 2004. The Honors Council unanimously endorsed these principles and instructed them to be disseminated to thesis committees beginning with the 2004-05 academic year.

The Honors College recognizes both the autonomy of thesis committees formed under its auspices and the subjective nature of any evaluation process. The intent of the principles described here is to aid each committee as it endeavors to fulfill its role in coming to an appropriate Honors decision based upon commonly held values within the discipline, the Honors College, and the University.

Instructions to the Jury
Or, Things to Think About at the End of a Thesis Defense

The Evidence
The decision on the level (No Honors, Honors, High Honors, and Highest Honors) to be awarded to the Honors candidate should include assessments of the following components:

1. The thesis or project
2. The presentation of the thesis/project
3. The discussion with the committee of the thesis/project
4. The reading list
5. The discussion with the committee of the reading list

Without question, the actual thesis work or project should carry the most weight, as it is the physical evidence presented by the candidate to represent the entirety of the thesis experience. However, each of the other facets is crucial to a successful final Honors exercise, and the components may reinforce or explicate each other. For example, the student’s command of the material occasionally becomes more evident through the presentation and discussion at the defense than it was in the written project.

Moreover, as the mission of the Honors College is to both broaden and deepen the student’s education, a reading list and subsequent discussion
that speak to the breadth of the candidate’s undergraduate experience is of paramount importance. A fundamental goal of Honors education is for students to think seriously about a wide range of subjects and ideas and to speak cogently about them.

**The Evaluation**
The evaluation of the thesis/project should include assessment of originality of thought evidenced in the process and the product, independence and self-direction of the student, creativity, command of the material and the subject, understanding of the importance and context of the work, appropriateness of the methodologies employed, and written and oral expression. Individual thesis work may involve other significant facets as well, related to the discipline or particular project.

Evaluation of the reading list and discussion should focus on breadth of ideas and works, clear expression of the influence of the texts on the student and her/his education, ability to make connections among the texts and to other areas of discourse, depth of analysis, and ability to engage in thoughtful dialogue.

**The Deliberation**
Determining the Honors level is often challenging. Thesis committees are charged with rewarding the thesis students for their hard work and commitment while ensuring the continuing integrity of the individual decisions. Disciplinary differences preclude standardization of specifics indicating Honors levels; the intent of having a broadly based thesis committee, with experience both in the discipline and in Honors education, is to provide a basis for deliberations that will yield an appropriate result.

There are four possible outcomes: No Honors, Honors, High Honors, and Highest Honors. A student who completes the project, as laid out by the advisor and student, in a competent and complete manner is awarded (at least) Honors. The Honors College encourages advisors to be honest with Honors students if this seems to be an unlikely conclusion, understanding that the student may still elect to bring the thesis to the full committee. A decision of No Honors does not necessarily mean that the student has not fulfilled the capstone requirement. This is a departmental decision, usually depending on the advisor’s assessment of the work completed.
High Honors are awarded to students who perform, in all or most of the facets discussed above, at an unusual or outstanding level; all components should play a role in this assessment. A student whose work is unusually strong in all the components will often receive High Honors as will one whose work is outstanding in a few of them.

Highest Honors should be reserved for the small percentage of Honors students whose work is exceptional, indicated by an outstanding performance in all of the components. Various benchmarks are occasionally used, e.g. favorable comparison to Master’s work in the discipline, publishable research, a mastery of subject and context far exceeding all expectations coupled with exceptional presentation of both thesis and reading list.

The committee may determine that a level of Honors will be granted only after the candidate completes specific revisions (more extensive than are typically required for final submission of a thesis) or additions. They may assign evaluation of this additional work to the thesis advisor, or they may ask that they see the final version either individually or as a group.

N.B. It is customary for committees to try to reach consensus during their deliberations. To this end, members of the committee may first sequentially express their analyses of the thesis defense. Due to the primacy of the advisor’s position, both in terms of working with the student and, typically, expertise in the subject area, we recommend that the advisor presents her/his comments after the other members of the committee have done so. We recognize that often the advisor can provide important insight to set the thesis work in context within the discipline or subdiscipline. After these initial expressions, it is common for deliberations to continue in an informal manner working toward the final decision. However, if the committee believes a vote is the best way to determine the outcome that is acceptable.
Appendix H: Honors College Thesis Project Rubrics

Rubric for the Written Thesis

Each of the following dimensions will be rated from unacceptable to outstanding based on the descriptors that define the area.

A student who attains honors will typically receive a rating of at least satisfactory on each of the dimensions below and on the rubrics connected with other facets of the thesis and defense. This is not an inviolable rule. 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. Likewise, the ratings of a student who receives highest honors are almost always all outstanding.

1. Research question or creative challenge
   - Unique research question/issue/creative challenge identified
   - Goals/objectives/hypotheses are explicit
   - Historical and contemporary contexts, assumptions/biases, or ethical considerations are identified
   - Thesis presented is within an academic framework

2. Methodology/approach: development
   - Methodology/approach is appropriate to disciplinary/interdisciplinary focus
   - Topic is contextualized among sources and materials cited
   - Multiple perspectives are considered
   - Demonstrates understanding of the content, tools, and structures in the field

3. Methodology/approach: implementation
   - Quantitative and/or symbolic tools are utilized effectively
   - Evidence is sufficient to address the research question and is well utilized
   - Accuracy and relevance of evidence are appropriately questioned; possible biases are identified
   - Evaluates, analyzes, and synthesizes information
   - Demonstrates understanding of professional standards
4. Conclusions, implications, and consequences
   - Conclusions, qualifications, and consequences, including value of
     thesis, are presented
   - Significance of what was discovered, learned, or created is
     demonstrated
   - Assertions are qualified and well supported
   - Demonstrates independent and critical thought

5. Writing
   - Language clearly and effectively communicates ideas
   - Any errors in grammar, spelling, mechanics, and/or punctuation are
     minimal
   - Organization is clear and effective
   - Sources and citations are used correctly

Rubric for the Thesis and Reading List Oral Defense

Each of the following dimensions will be rated from unacceptable to
outstanding based on the descriptors that define the area.

A student who attains honors will typically receive a rating of at least
satisfactory on each of the dimensions below and on the rubrics connected
with other facets of the thesis and defense. This is not an inviolable rule.
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. Likewise, the ratings of a student
who receives highest honors are almost always all outstanding.

THESIS

1. Presentation
   - Introduction is interesting and engaging
   - Speech is clear and articulate
   - Presentation is well-organized and easy to follow
   - Media and format are appropriate for content
   - Presentation appropriately represents the thesis project

2. Discussion with Committee
   - Questions are answered well and with reference to thesis student’s
     own work
• Demonstrates knowledge of the subject
• Comfortably engages committee
• Demonstrates understanding of and facility with the content of the thesis
• Demonstrates understanding of and facility with the disciplinary context and implications of the thesis
• Findings central to the thesis are extended to questions external to the discipline

READING LIST

1. List and Annotations
• Works demonstrate a breadth of interests and education as well as intellectual depth
• Reading list primarily reflects undergraduate experience
• Annotations provide insight into the works and the student
• Annotations open doors for engaging conversation

2. Conversation with Committee
• Student recognizes connections among works
• Student expands upon annotations in a thoughtful and meaningful way
• Student is comfortable responding to questions from committee
• Student is able to explore threads tangential to the works
• Texts are clearly demonstrated to have played a significant role in the student’s academic development

Rubric for the Thesis Advisor’s Assessment

Each of the following dimensions will be rated from unacceptable to outstanding based on the descriptors that define the area.

A student who attains honors will typically receive a rating of at least satisfactory on each of the dimensions below and on the rubrics connected with other facets of the thesis and defense. This is not an inviolable rule. 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. Likewise, the ratings of a student who receives highest honors are almost always all outstanding.
1. **Relationship with the advisor**
   - Assesses own knowledge, skills, and abilities accurately
   - Perseveres toward attaining mutually agreed upon goals
   - Displays high standards of attendance and punctuality
   - Responds thoughtfully to feedback
   - Sets, reflects upon and adjusts priorities in order to balance professionalism

2. **Relationship with the project**
   - Clearly understands the big picture while attending to the details of the specific project
   - Works independently; is a consistent “self-starter”
   - Reliably recognizes the existence of a problem, identifies potential causes, and implements possible solutions
   - Seeks and evaluates information using multiple criteria for topics/issues under consideration

3. **Assessment of the thesis project**
   - **Originality of thesis**
     Was the thesis idea developed by the student?
     Does the work done for the thesis represent an original perspective?

   - **Contribution of thesis to disciplinary or interdisciplinary scholarship**
     Does the thesis introduce new knowledge or analysis?
     Will the thesis serve to stimulate other research or scholarship?

   - **Publishability of thesis**
     Is the thesis likely to result in a peer-reviewed journal article?
     Is the thesis likely to result in a presentation at a professional meeting?
     Is the thesis suitable for publication in a student journal or presentation at a student session?

   - **Comparison of thesis work to master’s level work in field**
     Does the thesis work compare favorably to master’s thesis work in the field?
     Does the thesis work compare favorably to first-year master’s student work in the field?
Thesis Year: Important Dates & Deadlines

- **Register for HON498**  
  Registration Week(s)

**SEMESTER I**

- **Submit thesis proposal**  
  Week 4  
  (complete a *Thesis Form* 📄 *Advisor and Proposal* signed by your thesis advisor, the dean of the Honors College, you, and, if necessary, your department’s chair)

- **Register for HON499**  
  Registration Week(s)

- **Constitute thesis committee**  
  End of 498 semester  
  (names and signatures recorded on your *Thesis Form* 📄 *Thesis Committee*)

**SEMESTER II**

- **Hold thesis committee meeting**  
  Week 3

- **Finalize reading list**  
  Week 10  
  (recorded on *Thesis Form* 📄 *Reading List*, signed by your advisor and the dean of the Honors College)

- **Schedule defense**  
  Two weeks before defense  
  (recorded on your *Thesis Form* 📄 *Defense Schedule*, signed by your advisor and the dean of the Honors College)

- **Distribute final, edited pre-defense thesis and annotated reading list to committee**  
  Two weeks before defense

- **Defend thesis**  
  Last day of classes  
  (prepare *Thesis Form* 📄 *Honors Recommendation*, to be submitted by thesis advisor)

- **Submit final post-defense thesis**  
  University deadline  
  (*Thesis Form* 📄 *Final Acceptance* signed by thesis advisor and dean of the Honors College and an electronic version sent to the Honors College)
“When it comes to getting a job and living in the outside world, after college, I found that my Honors thesis was infinitely valuable.”

Angela King ’93 Wildlife Management

“The intense supervision of my Honors thesis was the most important academic experience of my life. My advisor’s personal guidance and insistence that I couple precise research with creative and original thought has served as a benchmark for me for over thirty years.”

James E. Tierney ’69 Political Science

The Honors College at the University of Maine
Robert B. Thomson Honors Center
5716 Colvin Hall
Orono, Maine 04469-5716

207.581.3263 (voice)
207.581.3265 (fax)

honors@maine.edu
honors.umaine.edu

Revised Jan 2012