

**GUIDE FOR
HONORS THESIS ADVISORS
AND
THESIS COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

AY 2018-2019

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For more information, please go to:

<https://honors.umaine.edu/current-students/academics/thesis/>

I. What is an Honors Thesis?

The majority of Honors Theses are academic works, though 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 it will also include your advisee's own contributions to the topic, an outgrowth of their critical engagement in the process.

Other theses take a "creative" (of course, all theses are creative!) approach and may result in a less traditional product. Students in art, music, new media, theatre, dance, and creative writing might find this more in line with their interests and aptitudes.

Yet other theses involve, to a great extent, a product which might be a disciplinary conference, a new periodical, an invention, or something we might not even be able to imagine; the options are almost endless!

In all of these cases, we ask that your advisee provide a written statement or prospectus which contextualizes the work and describes its scholarly content. You will need to sign and approve this prospectus (using Form 1) after your advisee completes it before they can submit it to the Honors College. Form 1 also outlines the responsibilities and expectations of both advisee and advisor.

II. The Honors Thesis Process

The Honors thesis at the University of Maine encompasses a yearlong project through the two-semester sequence of independent study courses, Honors 498 & 499 (3 credits each). For most majors, the thesis can take the place of the capstone. In some majors the capstone course is not waived if a student does a thesis and, most notably in pre-professional programs like nursing, engineering, and education, the goals of the capstone are sufficiently different from the Honors thesis that both may be required. However, in all cases, we have experience in making the thesis process work for the student. Please encourage your advisee to touch base if there are apparent conflicts or difficulties in making it all fit together. The following bullets summarize important elements of the process:

- Student should have thesis project outline and scope of work outlined in the semester before HON 498 is taken.
- The student's thesis committee is to be composed of 5 faculty members, including the advisor and a member of the Honors faculty who teaches in the Civilizations sequence. The other three members are typically chosen by the student in consultation with the advisor in order to meet departmental requirements and to provide additional technical expertise and advice.
- In addition to the thesis research and written thesis, Honors students are required to prepare a Reading List of works that represent their growth as a scholar and as a person through the college/honors experience.
- The student will prepare for an oral defense of the thesis and the reading list in time for graduation.
- The Honors thesis process is monitored through a series of forms (1-6) and well-defined timeline. Please see the updated calendar on the Honors thesis website given on the cover

page. The content of the thesis is developed with the advice of the advisor and committee members who also serve as evaluators of the thesis and defense and award a level of honors to the student.

III. Expectations of Honors Thesis Advisor

As a thesis advisor, I am agreeing to:

- Work with the student to refine and focus the student's interests into a suitable thesis project;
- Provide clear expectations for the thesis/project, addressing length, assessment, and other aspects germane to scholarship in the particular discipline;
- Help identify appropriate thesis committee members;
- Help the student to convene a committee meeting, no later than eight weeks into the Honors 498 semester, in which the student will present the thesis proposal and receive feedback.
- Be prepared to meet with the student regularly (at least biweekly, but we encourage weekly meetings) throughout the duration of the project;
- Read and comment on drafts 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 to be awarded;
- Grade the student in HON 498 and HON 499; and
- Participate in the year-end Honors Celebration if possible.

Remember: Your ADVISEE is responsible for the timely and successful completion of their thesis. It is this independence and commitment that separates thesis work from normal coursework.

IV. Expectations of Honors Committee Members

As an Honors Committee member, I am agreeing to:

- Work within the committee structure to help the student to refine the scope of the project;
- Provide appropriate entries into the literature relevant to the project;
- Read and comment on the final thesis; and
- Attend the thesis and reading list and contribute to the evaluation of the project.

V. Honors Reading List

The student will also complete an annotated reading list of books and, sometimes, a few "texts" such as movies, artwork, musical selections, or even a significant experience like study-abroad. The reading list is intended to represent the breadth of experience of the student in college and in Honors. The annotation may take either a traditional annotative system or a narrative structure. The importance is its annotation, rather than its format. This is one of the key areas where the Honors Thesis process differs from a graduate thesis. As described by one former Honors College Associate, "[the] reading list should draw a picture of [your advisee] as an undergraduate."

At most three texts may be drawn from the Honors Civilizations sequence. Typically the Honors member of the thesis committee is consulted about the reading list along with the advisor.

VI. Thesis Defense and Guidelines for Evaluation

At the end of the Honors thesis defense, the committee meets to evaluate the student's work and award a level of Honors: No Honors, Honors, High Honors, Highest Honors. 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.

Elements to be evaluated

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 and Thesis Rubrics

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.

A set of rubrics has been developed to help committees deliberate effectively and help normalize decisions across the wide range of disciplines and kinds of theses.

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 and Highest 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 sub-discipline. After these initial expressions, it is common for deliberations to continue in an informal manner working toward the final decision. However, there if the committee believes a vote is the best way to determine the outcome, that is acceptable.

VII. Support for Honors Thesis Work

The Honors College can help support student research work and thesis work through some fellowships in particular disciplines and through the Slavin Research Fund which provides support for materials and supplies. Other sources of support include the Center for Undergraduate Research (CUGR), CLAS, and individual investigator or research center grants and contracts. See <https://honors.umaine.edu/current-students/honors-fellowship-opportunities/>

VIII. Contacting the Honors College

If you have any questions, please contact the Honors College staff, and we will do our best to help!

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Honors Thesis Handbook Part 1 - Getting Started: What, Why, and Who

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Part 1 is a guide for 1st through 3rd-year students considering the honors thesis.

Overview of the Honors Thesis process:

Broadly, the honors thesis is an independent undertaking involving research or creative work that represents the culmination of your academic and personal endeavors as an undergraduate. This project includes three key components: 1) a written honors thesis--a body of work which demonstrates a deep understanding of a research or creative topic, 2) a written honors reading list which illustrates the breadth of your academic and personal development in college, 3) and a oral defense where you are asked to discuss both your honors thesis and reading list. This work is accomplished in HON 498 and HON 499.

1) **Written Thesis: Your thesis end goal** is a written document where the thesis question is discussed based on your research and analysis. In the case of creative theses, this document includes information on the creative process. In both types of thesis, the student is expected to include a thesis question, relevant literature, methodology, and analysis.

Often, the honors thesis can replace your major's capstone requirement ([see honors website for lists of covered majors](#)). If your major does not accept the honors thesis as a capstone replacement, significant expansion of a capstone project or development of a topic based on an academic minor or other significant interest can be used as a thesis.

2) **Reading List: Your reading list end goal** is a written document where you reflect on your time as an undergraduate student. This "list" is a selection of 12-15 "texts" that demonstrate your personal and intellectual growth. These "texts" are *mostly* books, but can also be articles, movies, artwork, music, TV shows, or other media that illustrate your intellectual journey, and experiences that provide a holistic understanding of you as an individual and critical thinker.

3) **Oral Defense: Your oral defense end goal** is a 2.5 hour thesis defense where your written thesis and reading list is discussed in front of your committee. About an hour is allotted for the written thesis as well as the reading list, and a half hour is devoted to deliberation on the level of honors you will receive.

Benefits of the Thesis Process:

Deciding to undertake the thesis process is a commitment to a significant amount of work, but there are important benefits to consider:

- Being one of a select group of students graduating from the University of Maine Honors College. Only around 5% of graduating seniors each year complete a degree with honors.
- An opportunity to explore, research, and create something that particularly interests you.
- Gaining/honing a particular knowledge and/or skill set.
- Confidence in your public presentation and speaking abilities.
- The chance to reflect on and synthesize four years of intellectual and personal growth.
- Developing professional relationships with advisors and mentors.
- Demonstrate academic motivation and intellectual specialization through a well-written document to showcase to graduate programs or employers.
- Strong sense of accomplishment on having completed a major, independent research or creative project.
- Distinction of honors will be recorded on both your diploma and your transcript.

More About the Honors Thesis

Determining a Thesis Topic: Theses are academic works. They present a hypothesis or assertion that is then tested, analyzed, evaluated, and defended according to the methods of the discipline. A thesis is not just another research paper--not even a very, very long research paper. A thesis will investigate the previous research on a topic, and, importantly, **it will also include your own insights and contributions to the topic**, *synthesized* from your critical engagement in the process.

In some disciplines, a creative approach can result in a different form of thesis. Students in art, music, new media, theatre, dance, or creative writing might find this more in line with their interests, aptitudes, and the expectations of their disciplines. Honors students have created paintings, composed music, written novels, made clothing, directed plays, and engaged in many other creative endeavors to fulfill the thesis requirement. Other theses might center on a new periodical, an invention, or something we might not even be able to imagine! All creative theses include a written piece accompanying the creative work which contextualizes it, discusses related research, and describes its scholarly content. **We strongly encourage students considering the creative option to come in and talk with the honors associates and/or the Honors College associate dean or dean, so we can give you more specific guidance.**

The people best able to help you figure out a thesis topic are faculty members in those disciplines. It would be a great idea to ask faculty members in your academic department for ideas as you begin to consider thesis topics.

Thesis Archives: Another way to find out what projects have been done in your discipline is to look at the Honors College thesis archive. We have hard copies of theses from 1937 to the present in Colvin and in Estabrooke, and you can search this database on our website; (<https://honors.umaine.edu/current-students/academics/thesis/search/>).

You will notice that theses range in length, and **there is no definitive answer to “how long does a thesis have to be?”** The best way to find what would be appropriate in your field is to find examples of previous theses or ask a faculty member in your department.

The Timeline for Honors and the Thesis Process

Creating and sticking to a realistic timeline is the critical first step for successfully completing your honors thesis. Here are the required classes for the thesis process:

- HON 391 (Usually taken in third year, mandatory for Class of 2022 and after)
- HON 498 (Usually in the Fall of final year)
- HON 499 (Usually in the Spring of final year)

The thesis writing calendar (available on the Honors College website) details the deadlines within HON 498 and 499:

<https://honors.umaine.edu/current-students/academics/thesis/forms/#calendar>

Requirements of the Honors Thesis Process

- A. HON 391--Introduction to thesis Research. Typically in the third year, your goal will be to identify a thesis topic and produce thesis prospectus.
- B. Thesis Form 1, which lists your thesis title, advisor, and includes a brief description of the topic is due at the end of the semester before you take HON 498.
- C. Enroll in HON 498, an “independent study” worth three credits.
- D. Enroll in HON 499, an “independent study” worth three credits.
- E. Your responsibilities in taking these classes include: arranging meetings (weekly, bi-weekly...) with your thesis advisor, meeting Honors College deadlines (see [thesis Writing Calendar](#)), and making steady progress in your research, creative work, and thesis writing to receive a grade in both HON 498 and 499. The goal of HON 498 and 499 is a final honors thesis and reading list document--one defended, edited, and submitted before graduation.

HON 498 and HON 499 are real classes even though there are no set times or class meetings in an independent study. The student works independently with an advisor and spends ~10 hours/week on the research and writing for your project, equivalent to a regular 3-credit course. The advisor grades the course.

Above all, 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.

The Thesis Advisor

A thesis advisor is an individual YOU work closely with on your thesis research and writing. Your advisor is typically a UMaine faculty member. Your advisor is your project mentor, and also grades HON 498 and 499. Co-advisors are possible--talk with the honors staff if you are thinking about co-advisors.

Finding a Thesis Advisor: Typically, students find an advisor by asking a faculty member if he or she is available to work with them on their thesis topic. The faculty member may be someone who you are already working with in a lab or on a research project, someone you had a class

with, or someone with expertise in your field of interest. We recommend you start thinking about this well before you begin your thesis. If you have trouble finding an advisor, contact the Honors College's associate dean or dean

Building the Thesis Committee: In consultation with your thesis advisor, you will choose committee members who have some expertise to offer on your thesis topic. The committee must be comprised of:

1. Five total members, including the advisor
2. One designated Honors College representative (a faculty member that has recently taught in the Civilizations sequence or a tutorial)
3. One member that is NOT within the discipline of your study*

*The honors member can serve as both the honors representative AND member outside of your discipline.

The Thesis Defense

The thesis defense is the presentation and discussion of your honors thesis and reading list. It typically involves a presentation of the research (c. 20 min.), and time for questions from your committee about the work. Both creative and research theses must follow the basic three-part defense structure:

- Honors thesis presentation with Q&A for one hour
- Honors reading list conversation with committee for one hour
- Committee deliberation for up to 30 minutes

Your defense is a presentation and discussion with your thesis committee--people YOU have selected, and who have been helping with your project! Remember, you will have spent lots of time working on both the thesis and the reading list, and therefore will have PLENTY to talk about!

Thesis Forms

thesis forms provide deadlines to keep you on track and allows us to measure the progress of thesis students.

It is YOUR responsibility to turn in these forms by the Honors College deadlines.

There are six thesis forms to complete in your thesis process, the first of which is due **before the end of your third year** (or the semester before enrolling in HON 498). thesis forms can be found on the Honors College website:

<https://honors.umaine.edu/current-students/academics/thesis/forms/#forms>

Please read ALL directions closely on each form before submitting them to the honors administrative office (146 Estabrooke).

More About the Honors Reading List

All Reading Lists are different, depending on the writer and texts chosen, but we have some examples of good ones on our website:

<https://honors.umaine.edu/current-students/academics/thesis/reading-lists/>

The Reading List can be written in one of two formats: narrative or annotated (see the examples on our website). Both serve the same purpose in describing your experiences, thinking, and intellectual growth after four years as a member of the Honors College at University of Maine.

A Preceptor's Take on the Reading List

"I generally describe the goal of the reading list as an opportunity to explore who you are as a thinking, feeling, acting human, how you fit within the various communities in your life, and how what is most important to you as you leave the College will move you to act in those communities in the coming years... I stress the word "most" a lot - that most of the text should be traditional book-like things, most of them should come from your University years, most of them should be things that weren't assigned to you in class, but that they should work within those suggestions to produce something that is authentic and that they're proud to share as a statement (or set of questions) about who they are at this moment in their world and how these texts and experiences interacted with each other to shape that person into being." -Jordan LaBouff, CLAS-Honors Preceptor of Psychology

Special Considerations:

What if I want to use human/animal subjects in my thesis research?

If you have a thesis idea that would involve human subject research, you may have to complete an IRB (Institutional Review Board) application before any research begins. This process is routinely done by many faculty and honors students. Contact the honors staff for more information and review the IRB page:

<https://umaine.edu/research/faculty/research-compliance/institutional-review-board-for-the-protection-of-human-subjects-irb/>

What if I want to use my group capstone project as my thesis?

The honors thesis process is an *individual* project, however here are the guidelines for acceptance of such a thesis:

- There is a strong rationale for the thesis to be related to a group project.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

- 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.

What if I want to write a collaborative thesis?

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:

- There is a strong rationale for the thesis to be collaborative.
- There are two collaborators; both are honors students.
- The two students have the same thesis advisor (they may and probably should have some different thesis committee members).
- 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.
- It must be clear, in writing and from the outset, who is responsible for what part(s) of the work.
- Every attempt should be made to have a joint meeting of all members of both thesis committees as per the requirements for individual theses.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Level of honors and grades for HON 498 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.

Next steps:

Hopefully this document has been useful in your decision to undertake the honors thesis. It is impossible to answer all questions for all student circumstances, so please use the decision tree in Appendix A for some guiding steps. If you still have questions, PLEASE COME SEE THE HONORS ASSOCIATES, ASSOCIATE DEAN, AND THE DEAN.

Honors Thesis Handbook Part 2 - Thesis Mechanics: When, Where, and How

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This document is a guide for students undertaking an honors thesis.

When to take the Honors Thesis Classes (HON 391, HON 498 and HON 499)

Here are five common examples of thesis class schedules for May graduates:

Year		3rd Year			4th Year	
Semester		Fall	Spring	Summer	Fall	Spring
Most Common	Plan 1	HON 391			HON 498	<u>HON 499</u>
	Plan 2		HON 391		HON 498	<u>HON 499</u>
	Plan 3	HON 391	HON 498		<u>HON 499</u>	
	Plan 4		HON 391	HON 498	<u>HON 499</u>	
Alternative Plan	Plan 5	HON 391		HON 498	<u>HON 499</u>	

If your academic plan would conflict with these sample timelines, **or you intend on graduating in August or December**, see the honors staff to create a plan that will fit your schedule.

Thesis Classes Meeting Times:

HON 391 - Once a week for 1.5 hours with the honors dean and honors associates

HON 498 - NO REGULAR MEETINGS. YOU arrange to meet with your thesis advisor.

HON 499 - NO REGULAR MEETINGS. YOU arrange to meet with your thesis advisor.

[Thesis Forms](#)

Use the Honors College website link for all form downloads:

<https://honors.umaine.edu/current-students/academics/thesis/forms/#forms>

Submitting Thesis Forms: Paper copies can be dropped off at the [Honors College administrative office, 146 Estabrooke](#), or you may email digital copies **ONLY IF** cc'ed to the [dean, associate dean, and honors associates](#).

- Thesis Form 1 - Due week 13 of the semester prior to taking HON 498
Thesis proposal submission: Identifies thesis advisor and describes project
- Thesis Form 2 - Due in week 8 of the HON 498 semester.
Committee meeting: approval of thesis project by committee
- Thesis Form 3 - Due in week 4 of the HON 499 semester
Reading List attached to form 3
- Thesis Form 4 - Due in week 8 of the HON 499 Semester.
Defense date scheduling
- Thesis Form 5 - Due the day of your defense.
Level of honors
- Thesis Form 6 - Due by May 31st for May grads, Aug. 31st for August grads, and Jan. 7th for December grads. This form is required for certification for graduation from the Honors College. Final acceptance of the thesis accompanied by a properly formatted copy in Word and a pdf version.

HON 391

[HON 391](#) is a 1-credit introduction to the honors thesis process, taught by the dean and honors associates. It gives you a full semester to understand the thesis process and to develop a thesis topic. At the end of HON 391 students submit a thesis prospectus which is the basis for thesis form 1 (which includes both a thesis description and a confirmed thesis advisor) as the final assignment, and formally begin work on the thesis and reading list. This course is graded Pass/Low Pass/Fail.

Finding a Thesis Advisor

Finding an advisor is one of the most important steps in the thesis process. For students working on a project in a lab, it is common to ask the professor in charge to be your advisor. Students with an independently developed thesis idea should research UMaine department faculty and their respective academic interests/specialties to identify potential advisors. Start by exploring your college/department websites:

<https://umaine.edu/colleges/>

Please note that some departments require the student to have an advisor from that department. Check with your academic advisor or your college's associate dean if this is true of your department before seeking out potential thesis advisors.

Having trouble locating contact info for a specific faculty member? Use the faculty directory search to find office locations, email, and office phone numbers:

<https://peoplesearch.maine.edu/>

If you would like to work with an advisor that is not a UMaine faculty member, please see the honors dean for approval.

Asking Someone to be my Advisor: The sample email in Appendix A may give you some ideas on how to approach a possible thesis advisor, especially if you have not met before, or

have not had a class with this person recently. Whether or not you use the sample email, be sure to provide the following link on honors advisor resources. The documents will provide more detailed information about the commitment of becoming a thesis advisor:

<https://honors.umaine.edu/faculty-resources/>

The email does not explicitly ask the faculty member to be the advisor, as it would be most effective for both parties to discuss the project first. Finding a match for your interests AND your work style are critical in successfully completing the honors thesis, so meeting in person with a potential advisor allows for you to ask more questions and determine if they are willing and/or able to take on the project.

If the potential advisor takes you on as an advisee, work together to create a more detailed thesis proposal. This description will be attached to thesis form 1, with the advisor's signature and the signature of your departmental chair or college's associate dean. The honors dean will review form 1 and sign off on the project if everything is in order.

IRB (Institutional Review Board) Application: If your thesis involves human or animal subjects research (surveys, interviews, testing, etc.), you must complete the IRB application BEFORE any research, surveys, interviews, tests, etc. take place. Work with your advisor to complete an IRB application and the required trainings before or very early in the HON 498 semester. Review of applications can take up to a month, so it is critical to complete this step as early as possible. Information and faculty contacts for the [IRB can be found here](#), and if you have any questions, please see the honors dean.

HON 498

When registering for HON 498 in Mainstreet, there will be roughly 100 different sections. Select the next available open section, as each thesis student is in their own section. Once you have submitted thesis form 1, which is due at the end of the semester before you enroll in HON 498, your advisor will be assigned to your section as the instructor for purposes of grading. As there are no regular meeting times for this "independent study," arranging to meet with your thesis advisor weekly is your responsibility.

Goals for HON 498: This is typically considered the "research" semester of the thesis process. Use this semester to review background literature, conduct experiments, gather data, or to begin the creative process. Writing can also begin now. [Review the thesis rubrics](#) from the Honors College with your advisor.

Goals for the Honors Reading List: Create a list of possible texts to review with the honors member of your committee. Draft the reading list for review and editing.

Obligations for HON 498:

- Submitted thesis form 1 by week 13 of the semester prior to taking HON 498
- Form a thesis committee
- Hold a committee meeting and submit thesis form 2 by the 8th week of the semester (see deadlines in [thesis calendar](#) for each form).
- Note thesis form 2 is **to be signed at the committee meeting**. It is NOT designed for you to gather signatures individually.

Grading for HON 498: Your thesis advisor grades HON 498 based on your progress in the course. For further thesis grading questions, please contact the honors associate dean.

Forming a Thesis Committee: Begin by discussing with your thesis advisor faculty who may be helpful in serving on the committee. DO NOT ask potential members to serve without consulting your advisor. The sample email in Appendix A may give you some ideas on how to approach a possible committee member.

Your thesis committee is composed of **5 faculty members:** your advisor (or co-advisors), who chair(s) the committee, and four (three, if using co-advisors) additional members, including one member outside of your discipline and one member in honors). For a list of current or recent honors faculty, see: honors.umaine.edu/home/people/honors-preceptors/). Individuals may fill more than one of these roles (the honors representative is often outside the thesis field, and therefore can act as honors representative AND outside representative).

These members suggest research sources, provide guidance, may help with specific research or analytical tasks, offer different perspectives, or serve as additional readers for your thesis. Clarify roles and expectations of your committee members at your first committee meeting. The committee determines the level of honors you will receive at the defense.

Holding a Committee Meeting: A committee meeting is **required by week 8** in your HON 498 semester. Allot one hour for this meeting and keep in mind the following objectives:

- Bring committee members up to speed on project goals and developments by giving a short presentation on what your project is, how the project is progressing, and why is this project significant to you.
- **BE PREPARED!** This is your committee's first impression of your project and you as a thesis scholar.
- Collect feedback on your project from the committee as a whole and debrief with your advisor.
- Set expectations for yourself and your committee members. Some committee members bring specific skills to the project and you will want to discuss how best to work with them, while other members will only want to read the finished product before the defense.
- Discuss a timeline for the project, including anticipated date of defense.
- Have committee members sign thesis form 2.

You are responsible for arranging the committee meeting and the meeting space. Honors classrooms are available to use for your meeting, but you must reserve them through the Honors College staff (Administrative Assistant, 146 Estabrooke Hall, or honors associates, 145.1 Estabrooke). If you would rather use a classroom space or conference room in your departmental building, see the administrative assistant for the department or building to reserve the space.

Arranging a time for five committee members to meet can be a challenge. We recommend using a meeting scheduling tool such as [Doodle](#), to determine availabilities. All 5 members need to be present at this meeting. If you have trouble finding a time, let us know and we can help.

In Appendix B, you will find a sample agenda for a committee meeting.

Your committee members will give feedback on your project, but it is up to you and your advisor to use those considerations in adapting the thesis. While the honors thesis only **requires** one committee meeting, a second meeting in the HON 499 semester is recommended to discuss your progress. Semi-regular emails to the committee with information about the project progress can also be useful. However, commitments of the committee will vary greatly with each project, so it is important for the student work this out with the committee.

HON 499

To be eligible to sign up for HON 499, **YOU MUST SUBMIT THESIS FORM 2.** When registering for HON 499 in MaineStreet, there will be roughly 100 different sections. Select the next available open section, as each thesis student enrolls in an individual section. As there are no regular meeting times for this “independent study,” arranging to meet with your thesis advisor weekly is your responsibility.

Goals for the Honors Thesis: This is typically considered the “writing” semester of the thesis process. Use this semester to finalize data analysis, write the thesis, and defend. You should expect to turn in **multiple** thesis drafts and revise them based on your advisor’s comments. It is helpful save each draft iteration as separate documents (Example: Last Name, First Name, thesis DRAFT #1)

Formatting the Thesis: Thesis documents are typically done in Microsoft Word. [ALL UMAINE STUDENTS ARE ABLE TO DOWNLOAD MICROSOFT OFFICE 2016 FOR FREE HERE.](#)

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

Although many students will write in Google Docs, there are required formatting elements that **ARE NOT** supported in Google Docs, and we cannot accept a Google Doc as a final version. Use this opportunity to learn Microsoft Word if you are unfamiliar with the application, and please follow the **formatting table in Appendix C**. Videos outlining formatting steps will be provided by the honors staff in workshop sessions, and a full formatting guide is available - see Appendix C for links.

Work with your advisor to make sure all of your sources are properly cited. Remember figures/graphs/tables/photos need their own citations/captions. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense: if sources are not present or improperly cited, disciplinary action may ensue.

Put link to Formatting guide here: AFTER IT IS EDITED *add sean’s videos

Goals for the Honors Reading List: Working with your advisor and/ or the honors member of your thesis committee, write the annotated or narrative version of the reading list. You will also write multiple drafts for revision. Thesis Form 3 (Reading List) must be submitted in the HON 499 semester for approval by the Honors dean, **with the final version of the Reading List attached by the fourth week of your 499 semester.**

Obligations for HON 499: You must submit thesis forms 3, 4, 5, and 6 in the HON 499 semester (see deadlines in [thesis calendar](#) for each form). This includes turning in a final draft of your reading list (form 3), scheduling your thesis defense date, time, and location (form 4), participating in the defense (form 5), and the final submission of the post-defense edited thesis (form 6). The most significant obligation for HON 499 is to complete and successfully defend your thesis.

Grading for HON 499: Your thesis advisor grades HON 498 based on your progress in the course. For further thesis grading questions, please contact the honors associate dean. Grades are determined by your thesis advisor. You can be given an A through F for your work in HON 499. There is also an optional “TH” grade that can be assigned which means that your advisor will retroactively give you a grade in HON 499 once the thesis process is complete. However, **YOU CANNOT GRADUATE WITH A “TH” OR A BLANK GRADE ON YOUR TRANSCRIPT;** therefore your advisor will need to submit a grade for both HON 498 and 499 before you are certified to graduate. For further thesis grading questions, please contact the Honors associate dean.

When to Defend the Thesis and Reading List

For this part of the process, your most important task is to work with your advisor and provide a final, thoroughly edited version of your thesis (along with your reading list) to each member of your committee at least two weeks prior to the scheduled defense. Do not share a copy of your **final** document with your committee without prior knowledge/approval of your thesis advisor. **If your thesis is submitted without proper editing or less than two weeks prior to the scheduled defense, you will need to reschedule your defense.**

The Honors College recommends that you defend your thesis and reading list in the month prior to your graduation if not earlier. Defending several weeks before graduation typically means that committee members have more time in their schedules, and if you need to push the defense date back in the case of a scheduling conflict or an emergency, there will still be time before the end of the semester. We also recommend that you determine your defense date as early as possible.

Scheduling the Defense Date: You must submit form 4--which confirms the date of your defense-- to the honors office no later than week 8 of the 499 semester. It is recommended that you determine the defense date at your committee meeting, or as soon as possible thereafter, using tools like [Doodle](#). Send out a reminder of the time and place to your committee a couple of days before your thesis defense.

Location of the Defense: You are responsible for arranging a defense space. Honors classrooms are available to use for your defense, but you must reserve them through the Honors College staff. If you would rather use a classroom space or conference room in your departmental building, see the administrative assistant for the department or building to reserve the space. The honors associates may also be available to assist you if you have reasonable technology requests such as: dongles, chargers, spare laptops. But resources are limited, and you'll want to email the associates well in advance of your defense.

Defending the Thesis and Reading List

Thesis defenses last 2.5 hours, and must follow the three-part defense structure. **Refer to the sample thesis Defense Agenda in Appendix B.** The first hour is devoted to your thesis work. Usually you will be asked to present a summary of your thesis for about 20 to 30 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 of this first hour is something you should talk over with your advisor.

Refreshments are not required as part of the thesis defense process but are a nice gesture.

A short break is optional between defense of the thesis and defense of the reading list. In the second hour, you will defend your reading list, where you discuss how these texts were significant in your intellectual development and undergraduate education. Since members of your committee may not be familiar with some of the texts included, you should be able to convey a sense of the importance of these works. Be prepared for this discussion to go far afield of the actual texts; your committee members will want to know how you make connections and how you push the envelope of your education. Bear in mind that all reading list defenses are different. It's important for the student to engage in this discussion of their reading list in a way that demonstrates a deep engagement with the texts.

The last half hour is for the committee to determine a level of honors based on your written thesis, reading list and oral defense. You will be asked to leave the room while the discussion happens, and typically your advisor will invite you back into the room to be notified of the committee's decision, and any edits that need to be made before final submission.

Evaluation of the Thesis, Reading List and Defense

To receive any level of honors for the thesis, the committee should agree that the thesis, which is the major body of work here, deserves at least honors. The committee can award the following levels of honors based on your efforts:

- No Honors
- Honors
- High Honors
- Highest Honors

Further definitions of criteria for level of honors can be found [in these rubrics](#).

In addition to the written thesis, the oral presentation of the thesis, the performance in the Q&A, and the depth of discussion of the reading list will all play a part in the the committee's determination of the level of honors.

Submitting the Final Thesis

It is the **requirement** of the Honors College that your final thesis is submitted as both a Word document AND a pdf. If the submitted thesis is in another format or requires different software to edit (LaTeX or others), the Honors College staff **will not be able to do any editing**. 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, and certification for graduation initiated. **Please use the Formatting Checklist in Appendix C before emailing your documents to the Associates.**

The final Word document and pdf should be emailed to BOTH Honors Associates for submission.

Graduating with Honors: All thesis forms and the digital thesis (properly formatted) must be submitted by May 31st for May grads, by Aug. 31st for August grads, and by January 15th for December grads. These documents are required before the Honors College will certify you as an Honors College graduate (even if you have successfully defended your thesis)! It is your responsibility to be sure all of the documents are submitted by the deadline.

Appendix A - Template Emails

Email to potential Advisor

Hello Professor _____,

My name is _____, and I am currently a third year _____ major in the Honors College. I am looking to undertake the honors thesis and would like to discuss my thesis idea with you at your earliest convenience. I am interested in _____ (thesis topic description)____, and feel that your specialty/research in _____ would help in refining my topic/research question. I am available (days and times) to meet. Attached, you will find a more detailed description of my thesis proposal for your review.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you,

<https://honors.umaine.edu/faculty-resources/>

Email to Potential Committee Member

Hello Professor _____,

My name is _____, and I am currently a fourth year _____ major in the Honors College. I am beginning the honors my thesis this year, and would like to discuss my thesis idea with you at your earliest convenience. I am working with my advisor, _____ on _____ (thesis topic description), and feel that your specialty/research in _____ would help in refining my topic/research question. I am most available (days and times), and would like to meet with you if possible!

Thank you for your time and consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you,

Appendix B - Sample Agendas

Sample thesis Committee Meeting Agenda

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. Discuss 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. Other Business

Sample thesis Defense Agenda

Date:
Time:
Location:

AGENDA

- I. Honors thesis & Research (~1 Hour)
 - A. Presentation (~20 min)
 - B. Committee Questions (~40 min)
- II. Honors Reading List (~1 Hour)
 - A. Presentation/Reading List Description (~3 min)
 - B. Reading List Discussion (~55 min)
- III. Committee Deliberation (~30 min)
 - A. Level of honors discussion
 - B. Suggestions for edits/revision

Appendix C - Formatting

Thesis Document Pages and Page Numbering Overview	
Preliminary Pages	
Title Page	Number not typed on page, counted
Copyright (Optional)	Number not typed on page, counted
Abstract	Number not typed on page, counted
Dedication (Optional)	Lower-Case Roman Numeral
Acknowledgements (Optional)	Lower-Case Roman Numeral
Preface/Forward (Optional)	Lower-Case Roman Numeral
Table of Contents	Lower-Case Roman Numeral
List of Figures, Tables (If Any)	Lower-Case Roman Numeral
Body Pages	
Text	Arabic Numerals (Must begin with 1)
Bibliography	Arabic Numerals
Appendix(ices) (If Any)	Arabic Numerals
Authors Biography	Arabic Numerals

Formatting Videos

- General Overview -
- Title Page and Margin -
- Hidden Formatting, Page/Section Breaks -
- Page Numbers -
- Table of Contents -
- Table of Figures -

Full thesis Formatting Guide

<https://honors.umaine.edu/current-students/academics/thesis/forms/#guide>

FORMATTING GUIDE CHECKLIST

(last updated 6/2018)

TITLE PAGE

Title: Capitalized, double spaced

Ensure that “by” is lowercase

Reference example title page

MARGINS

Left: 1.5

Right, Top, Bottom: 1

FONT

Times New Roman, 12 point

Exception: Size for captions & footnotes: 10 point

SPACING

Double-spaced

Exceptions: Single Spaced: advisory committee (title page), thesis submitted lines (title page), footnotes, bibliography, captions, data within tables, quotations longer than 4 lines

ORDER (**bold** is mandatory)

1. Title Page

2. Copyright Page

3. Abstract

4. Dedication/Preface

5. Acknowledgements

6. Preface or Foreword

7. Table of Contents

8. List of Figures, Tables, Definitions

9. Text of Manuscript

10. Bibliography

11. Appendices

12. Author’s Biography

PAGINATION

Nothing: title page, copyright page, abstract

Small Roman Numerals (ex: ii, iv): dedication/preface, acknowledgments, preface/foreword, table of contents, list of figures/tables/definitions

Starting Number: document page number

Arabic Numerals (ex: 1, 2): text of manuscript, bibliography, appendices, author’s biography

Starting Number: 1

CHAPTER/SECTION

Starts on new page

Capitalized

Centered

Three Spaces underneath

SUBHEADING LEVELS

1st: Centered and underlined

2nd: Side and underlined

3rd: underlined beginning at the paragraph indentation, followed by a period and the text.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contains (at least): all chapter/section and 1st level headings

Contains Listings for: bibliography, appendices, author's bio

CHARTS/GRAPHS/TABLES/FIGURES

If any, thesis must have a list after the Table of Contents

Each one must...

Fit on one page

Have a caption on the same page

BIBLIOGRAPHY/WORKS CITED/LIST OF REFERENCES

Entries: Single spaced

Between Entries: double spaced

APPENDICES

If multiple, appendices cover page before them

FINAL CHECKING

Page numbers on table of content (and list of figures) are correct

Everything fits within the margins

Font and size is correct on page numbers