
Table of Contents

Honors Thesis Classes ..........................................................................................................................1
Thesis Forms........................................................................................................................................1
HON 391 ...........................................................................................................................................2
Thesis Advisor....................................................................................................................................2
HON 498 ...........................................................................................................................................3
HON 499 ...........................................................................................................................................5
Defense ................................................................................................................................................6
Submission .........................................................................................................................................8
Appendix A- Template emails .........................................................................................................9
Appendix B- Template Meeting agenda ...........................................................................................10
Appendix C- Formatting .....................................................................................................................11
Formatting Guide Checklist ...............................................................................................................12
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>3rd Year</th>
<th>4th Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semester</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most Common</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan 1</td>
<td>HON 391</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>HON 391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan 3</td>
<td>HON 391</td>
<td>HON 498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan 4</td>
<td></td>
<td>HON 391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan 5</td>
<td>HON 391</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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](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’d 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/](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/](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 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 Mainestreet, 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 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preliminary Pages</th>
<th>Body Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title Page</strong></td>
<td><strong>Text</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number not typed on page, counted</td>
<td><strong>Bibliography</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Copyright (Optional)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Appendix(ices) (If Any)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number not typed on page, counted</td>
<td><strong>Authors Biography</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Abstract</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number not typed on page, counted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dedication (Optional)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower-Case Roman Numeral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Acknowledgements (Optional)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower-Case Roman Numeral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preface/Forward (Optional)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower-Case Roman Numeral</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><strong>List of Figures, Tables (If Any)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower-Case Roman Numeral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 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](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