



## **GUIDELINES FOR SENIOR HONORS THESIS**

As the final step toward graduation with honors, each student is expected to write a senior thesis or complete a senior project. The senior honors thesis is recommended to for students planning to attend graduate school. Students who wish to graduate with University Honors will complete the thesis (6 credit hours). Students planning a thesis should also check with their department, which may have their own guidelines.

**1. ELIGIBILITY** You may write a senior honors thesis if your cumulative grade point average is at least 3.25, including your grades from the first semester of your junior year. In addition, you must have a cumulative average of at least 3.5 in the field of your thesis topic. In computing these averages, grades from all institutions attended will be counted, and the scholastic amnesty provision does not apply. Students should keep in mind that eligibility to write a thesis does not ensure graduation with honors. All other requirements as stated in the UNO Catalog must be met.

**2. CHOOSING A THESIS ADVISOR** Early in the second semester of your junior year, you should begin planning your thesis, bearing in mind that the senior year provides barely enough time for the actual research and writing. You may wish to begin by scheduling an appointment with the director of the Honors Program, who will help you think about the various possibilities for a thesis topic and advisor. Your thesis advisor will have three main responsibilities: (1) to assist you in your choice of topic; (2) direct your research and critique your writing; (3) and supervise the final stages, including the oral defense of your thesis. The thesis advisor should be someone who has expertise in your thesis topic and who knows your academic work. Note that toward the end of the project an additional faculty member in your major (chosen in consultation with your thesis advisor) will be asked to read your thesis and participate in the oral defense.

**3. CHOOSING A TOPIC** Schedule a meeting with the person you wish to have as thesis advisor. If the person agrees to function as advisor, the two of you should attempt to find a topic that will meet the following criteria: (1) it should be of interest to both of you; (2) it should be specific enough so that, despite your limitations of knowledge and time, the written presentation can be thorough; (3) and it should be realizable within the limits of six semester hours, that is, about 250 hours of work during your senior year.

**4. PROSPECTUS** After consulting with your thesis advisor on a topic and focus, write a 2-4 page prospectus (a proposal or plan) in which you address the following:

- a. Give background on your topic/focus, explaining what related research has already been done. (Cite relevant research as you explain.)
- b. Explain how your research will be different from work already done on the topic.
- c. Anticipate the steps of research and argument you will follow in order to construct the main body of your thesis.
- d. Outline the time-table you expect to follow in completing your work.
- e. List, in bibliographic form, some of the sources you expect to use.

In writing the prospectus, be careful not to anticipate too much. On the other hand, in your completed work, you will need to be able to state claims that are fairly specific and definite. Submit the revised and completed prospectus first to your thesis advisor for approval and then to the Honors Program director. (Approval signatures need to be on the "Permission to Begin Senior Honors Thesis" form.)

**5. APPROVAL OF PROSPECTUS** When the prospectus has been revised such that the thesis advisor considers it satisfactory, obtain the advisor's signature on the "Permission to Begin Senior Honors Thesis" form. Bring the signed form and approved prospectus to the Honors Office (Library 301). At that time you should also make an appointment with the Honors Program director. By the time of your appointment, the Honors Program director will have read your prospectus and will then discuss your plan – and the thesis process with you. Note: Only after your prospectus has been approved by both the thesis advisor and the Honors director should you register for "Senior Honors Thesis." You do not have permission to register until then.

**6. REGISTRATION FOR SENIOR HONORS THESIS** After your prospectus has been approved by both the thesis advisor and Honors director, and your GPA eligibility to proceed with a thesis is verified by the Honors Program, then you may register for Senior Honors Thesis. (Check the UNO catalog for the course number for your major; Interdisciplinary Studies students register for A&S 3999.) The thesis usually carries six hours of credit, three hours for each of two semesters of thesis work. After the first semester of thesis work, your thesis advisor will give you "no grade" (NG). After the thesis is completed and successfully defended, then the advisor will award you a grade for the full six hours.

**7. DEADLINES** The dates for completion and submission of the completed thesis will be spelled out to you in a letter from the Honors Program director at the beginning of the semester in which you will defend the thesis. The general rule is this: expect to submit the finished thesis (not a rough draft, but one meeting the thesis advisor's and second reader's approval) to the Honors Program a couple of weeks after mid-terms. (Earlier deadlines during the course of the two-semester thesis process will have been worked out between you and your thesis advisor.) Once the Honors director reads your thesis and determines that it is ready to be defended, s/he will notify you to arrange the time for the defense, which will take place a week or two after you submit your final draft. (This timeline assumes a fall or spring semester completion. Only under special circumstances will a summer schedule be possible.) Most importantly, the thesis to be defended may not be a rough draft. It must be totally finished, approved by your thesis advisor and second reader, and already in the format spelled out in the style sheet.

**8. ORAL DEFENSE** After turning in the final draft of your thesis, and receiving the go-ahead of the Honors director, you must schedule an oral defense, which requires that you coordinate your calendar with that of your thesis advisor, second reader, and the Honors director. At the defense you will be asked to make a brief presentation about the thesis and answer questions your committee may pose. Your committee consists of the thesis advisor, your second reader (selected by you and the thesis advisor, possibly in consultation with the Honors director and the advisor's department chair), and an Honors Program representative. In most cases, minor changes will be required before final acceptance of the thesis.

**9. AFTER THE DEFENSE** Any last-minute changes ("clean up") noted by the Honors director and other thesis readers at the time of the defense must be made by the student in time to submit two final copies (one hard copy, one electronic copy) of the thesis to the Honors Office no later than a few days after the defense. (The Honors director will provide instructions.) Note: do not proceed with the final stage of copying and binding stage of copying and binding your thesis until you get the "go ahead" from the Honors director.

# PERMISSION TO BEGIN SENIOR HONORS THESIS

NAME AS IT SHOULD APPEAR ON THE DIPLOMA (PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT):

GRADUATION DATE \_\_\_\_\_ UNO I.D. \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE # \_\_\_\_\_

CURRENT ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

THESIS TITLE

DEPARTMENT \_\_\_\_\_ COLLEGE \_\_\_\_\_

I HAVE READ AND APPROVED THE PROSPECTUS FOR THIS THESIS:

THESIS ADVISOR \_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT NAME SIGNATURE

CO-ADVISOR (IF APPLICABLE) \_\_\_\_\_

HONORS PROGRAM DIRECTOR \_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE

I UNDERSTAND THAT I MUST MEET ALL UNIVERSITY REQUIREMENTS TO GRADUATE WITH HONORS:

STUDENT'S SIGNATURE

I PLAN TO GRADUATE WITH:

UNIVERSITY AND DEPARTMENTAL HONORS ☐ DEPARTMENTAL HONORS ONLY ☐

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## Checklist

If research is with humans, "human subjects" protocol is approved ([unoirb@uno.edu](mailto:unoirb@uno.edu), ext. 5454) \_\_\_\_\_

If research is with animals, "animal subjects" protocol is approved ([unoirb@uno.edu](mailto:unoirb@uno.edu), GP 2069) \_\_\_\_\_

Style sheet obtained \_\_\_\_\_

Second reader chosen \_\_\_\_\_

Final draft submitted \_\_\_\_\_

Oral defense scheduled \_\_\_\_\_