

Honors Thesis Manual

Honors Program

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Introduction

Congratulations! You have arrived at an important milestone in your pursuit of an honors degree at The University of Memphis: writing your Honors thesis. The process of writing a thesis may be one of the most rewarding, yet challenging experiences of your education thus far. In fact, the honors thesis is the culmination of an Honors curriculum at The University of Memphis and epitomizes Honors education. In close consultation with a faculty member, you will undertake a major research project or creative experience appropriate to a serious undergraduate program.

This handbook summarizes the requirements and procedures for completing an honors thesis. Much of the handbook contents—ranging from the selection of your thesis topic and your advisor to the preparation of the final manuscript—are included in response to the many questions that the Honors staff have received from students. This guide should answer your questions about thesis preparation. If you have specific questions that are still not answered, please contact the Honors office at (901) 678-2690.

The Advantages of an Honors Thesis

Although undertaking thesis research is hard work, most students report that the thesis is one of their most prized academic achievements. Professors who work with students on the honors thesis can write meaningful letters of recommendation and may be able to place students in contact with colleagues at other schools or companies. Moreover, graduate schools frequently require writing samples as part of the application process, and an honors thesis frequently serves as the centerpiece for your application for awards, scholarships, or graduate or professional study.

In conjunction with your undergraduate degree, the honors thesis signals to potential employers and prospective graduate schools that you have the maturity of intellect that will be applicable to whatever profession you choose. Your honors thesis provides ample evidence of your ability to pursue independent initiatives and to make a contribution to your profession.

Types of Thesis Projects

In general, honors theses fall into two categories:

- For students in the liberal arts or laboratory sciences, the thesis may be a written piece of work. But writing a thesis differs from writing simply another research paper for two reasons. First, an honors thesis usually entails producing a work that is about 30-40 pages long, although some—particularly in math and the laboratory sciences—may be shorter. Second, the thesis should contain original insight into a discipline or body of knowledge. The honors thesis should go beyond merely summarizing the existing research and include a student's own critical and creative thinking.
- For students in majors such as drama, art, music, film, or engineering, the honors thesis may be a creative endeavor appropriate to the discipline. For example, an art student might create an exhibition of original works, a film student might produce a documentary, a creative writing student might write a collection of short stories, or an engineering student might design a prototype. If the honors thesis is a creative work, a substantive written description (approximately 15 pages) must accompany the project, detailing how the creative work meets the goals of a thesis.

Examples of past theses include:

- Critical or textual analyses
- Creative writing projects (e.g., portfolio of short stories or poems)
- Business plans
- Teaching portfolios
- Laboratory or field experiments

- Creative performances or exhibits
- Original creative products such as a Web site, musical composition, etc.

We recommend that you view the honors thesis as a two-semester, six-credit project. In the first semester of your senior year, you should enroll in directed research or independent study; in the second semester, you should enroll in honors thesis hours. Some departments offer an honors senior thesis which will satisfy the thesis requirement in the University Honors Program. If a department does not have such a course, then you will need to enroll in UNHP 4999 Honors Thesis.

If you do choose to write your thesis in one semester, plan ahead! A good background on the subject will give you the running start that you need to complete the thesis in one semester.

Timeline for the Honors Thesis

The following timetable is offered as a guideline. Students are recommended to begin the thesis research (UNHP 4900 Advanced Honors Projects or an equivalent course in the major department) in the fall of the senior year and complete the thesis (UNHP 4999 Honors Thesis or an Honors Thesis course in the major department) in the spring of the senior year.

Event	Timeframe
Select a topic	Second semester of junior year
Approach faculty members about mentoring and reviewing	Second semester of junior year
Register for UNHP 4900 Advanced Honors Project (a permit will be issued when application is approved) or contract for Honors research credit in another department.	First semester of senior year
Submit draft (or sufficient work worthy of 3 hours of research credit to the faculty mentor for approval. Faculty member will assign a grade for the course.	Last class day or equivalent
Submit Application for Honors Thesis form to the Honors Program.	Prior to registering for UNHP 4999 Honors Thesis or equivalent course in another department. Form MUST be submitted before the last day to add a class in the graduating semester.
Register for UNHP 4999 Honors Thesis (a permit will be issued) or an Honors Thesis in another department.	Second semester of senior year
Submit final copy of the project to the Honors Office to be certified to graduate with University Honors.	Not later than study day of the semester you are enrolled in an Honors Thesis course.

Your Thesis Committee

In most cases, the thesis committee will consist of a **thesis advisor**, who will monitor your progress and grade your work, and another professor who serves as a **second reader**. Thesis advisors must be full-time, tenure-track faculty members at the University of Memphis, but second readers do not have to be full-time faculty members. Some departments (like English) may require more than two faculty members; check with your departmental honors coordinator to determine your department's guidelines for forming a thesis committee.

Thesis Advisor. Selecting your thesis advisor is one of the most important decisions that you will make during this process. Because you will have to work with this person closely for at least a semester, you should consider both the professor's expertise and the potential for a close working relationship. The two of you must be able to communicate well and cooperate on your endeavor, because you will rely upon your advisor for help, encouragement, and support.

The thesis advisor acts as your guide through the process of completing an honors thesis. The advisor will work with you to refine your interests into a suitable thesis, help you to identify a second reader, meet with you regularly (every two weeks is recommended), and read and comment on drafts of the thesis as it develops.

Many students select a thesis advisor from a class or independent study and can connect their thesis topic to work they have already done with the professor. Other students may know that a certain professor shares their research interest, but they may not have been enrolled in a course with him or her. In either case, make an appointment with the professor to discuss your research topic and your desire for that person to serve as your thesis advisor. If you don't know the professor personally, be prepared to present your qualifications.

It is not unusual to speak to several faculty members before finding the right person to direct your thesis. If a professor you visit is too busy or feels unqualified to be your thesis advisor, ask the professor to suggest colleagues who may serve as your advisor. Your departmental advisor or the departmental Honors coordinator may also be a good source of information about faculty members who have similar interests to yours or who have served as thesis advisors in the past.

As you approach a faculty member about being your thesis advisor, please explain that the University Honors Program thesis requirement is the baccalaureate-level equivalent of the master's thesis for that area of study. While honors students are not expected to produce the equivalent of a master's thesis, they are expected to engage in a research project or creative endeavor that approaches a master's thesis in length and scope, using the same research methods and skills.

Second Reader. Ideally, you should have a second professor serve on your thesis committee as a "second reader." This committee member is responsible for providing guidance to you where appropriate, meeting with you occasionally, and reading and commenting on drafts of the thesis in later stages of its development. If you do not already have a professor in mind as your second reader, your thesis advisor can usually recommend someone.

While you should have a general idea of your thesis topic, it is not necessary to have a definitive proposal before forming your thesis committee. In fact, your committee will probably help you to refine your research interests so that you will be on track to developing a "doable" thesis project.

Selecting a Thesis Topic

Think about topics in your course work that interested you. Are there any particular topics that piqued your interest? You may want to review the courses you have taken as an undergraduate and/or review papers that you have written, because a thesis topic often emerges from classes, directed studies, or internship experiences.

Alternatively, perhaps you have a particular professor in mind who you think would make an ideal thesis advisor. Schedule an appointment with this professor to talk about his or her research interests. Often thesis topics emerge from a faculty member's ongoing research projects, especially in the sciences where students are involved in laboratory work.

Keep in mind that you will be working on this project for a semester or even an entire year. Thus, it is important that you choose a topic that will hold your interest for this period of time.

Application for Honors Thesis

The Application for Honors Thesis form must be filed with the Honors Program office by the third Friday of the semester in which you are enrolled in an honors thesis. Prior to submission to the Honors Program office, the application should be approved and signed by the faculty member responsible for directing the senior honors thesis, and by the departmental honors coordinator if applicable. The Application for Honors Thesis form **MUST** be submitted to the Honors Program in order for a student to be certified to graduate with the designation of “University Honors with Thesis.”

The Application for Honors Thesis form is located in Appendix 1.

Registration for the Thesis Course

You must have the approval of the faculty member who serves as the thesis director to register for a thesis course. **All Honors Program students must enroll in a thesis course.** You will need to register for your honors thesis course (UNHP 4999 or an equivalent honors thesis course in your department) during the semester you actually write your thesis.

Parts of the Thesis

The following is the standard format for an Honors thesis or project paper.

Title Page: All copies must contain a title page. The title page must contain the title of the thesis, the statement of submission, the name of the candidate, the name of the University granting the degree, the year the degree is to be granted, and the names of the appropriate persons on the thesis committee. *See Appendix 2.*

Abstract Page: The abstract is a brief, comprehensive summary of the contents of the thesis. It should state the problem, describe the procedure or methods used, and summarize the conclusions reached. The body of the abstract should be no longer than one page, single-spaced. Your name, degree to be conferred, university, month/year degree will be conferred, the thesis title, and name of thesis advisor should appear at the top of the page. *See Appendix 2.*

Dedication Page: This optional page is used if you wish to honor someone who has significantly influenced your life or career. Dedications are typically short; for example, “This thesis is dedicated to my mother and father.”

Acknowledgments: This optional page is where special help received (guidance from your committee members, funding agencies, relatives, etc.) should be acknowledged.

Table of Contents: The table of contents reflects the outline and organization of the thesis. The main body of text (and corresponding sections or chapters), bibliography, appendix material (if any), list of tables (if any), and list of figures (if any) should appear in the table of contents. Preliminary pages (e.g., acknowledgments, dedication, etc.) are not included. *See Appendix 2.*

Lists of Figures and Tables: If two or more figures (or two or more tables) appear in the main body of text, you must include a list of figures (or tables) after the table of contents. Each legend must appear in the list exactly as it appears in the text (same wording, same figure/table numbers). *See Appendix 2.*

Manuscript Guidelines

Honors students are expected to follow the style requirements for their fields (e.g., APA style for social sciences or MLA guidelines for humanities). Consult with your thesis advisor for a recommended format. General recommendations follow:

Paper Quality and Binding Material

- The original, hard copy that you submit to the Honors Program Office should be on white, 20 lb. Bond paper with a 25% or higher rag content.
- The Honors Program's copy of your thesis should be bound with VeloBind, available at FedEx Kinkos.

Font and Point Size

- Choose one font (10-12 point) and use throughout the thesis.

Margins

- Margins should be 1.0" at the top, right, and bottom; 1.5 " at the left.

Spacing

- The text should be double-spaced, but you may single-space quotations more than 4 lines in length, footnotes, and bibliographical/reference entries.
- A subheading at the bottom of the page must have two full lines of text below it. Otherwise, the subheading should begin on the next page.

Manuscript Organization

- Recommended page order is: front flyleaf (blank page); title page; dedication page; acknowledgments; abstract page; table of contents; list of tables; list of figures; body of thesis; bibliography/references; appendix.

Page Numbering

- The preliminary pages (e.g., the Dedication, Acknowledgment, the Abstract, Table of Contents, List of Tables, and List of Figures) are numbered in lower case Roman numerals (ii, iii, and so on). They should be placed flush with the top, right-hand margin.
- The Title Page is not numbered. It is understood to be page Roman numeral i, although the number does not appear on the page itself.
- The main body of the text, including references, is numbered with Arabic numerals. They should be placed flush with the top, right-hand margin.

Table of Contents

- Place the word Page above page number column.
- Use leader dots between listings and page numbers.
- Use double space above and below all major headings.
- Single space all subheadings.
- Use all capital letters for major headings.
- Include the preliminary pages in the Table of Contents. Begin with the Abstract.
- List the Reference section and the Appendix (if any).
- Make sure page numbers correspond to the text.

List of Figures and List of Tables

- Include a list if two or more figures (or tables) are used in main body of text.
- Use a separate list for tables and separate list for figures.
- Place the word Page above page number column.
- Use leader dots from last word of title to page number.
- Double space between figure (or table) titles; single space title if it is two or more lines.
- Check page numbers in the List of Tables (or Figures) against those in the text.

References/Bibliography

- Cite all references in the text; reference all citations.
- Be consistent in the referencing style used (APA or MLA).

Appendices

- Place appendix headings either on a separate cover sheet before appendix material or on the top of first page of each appendix.

APPENDIX 1: HONORS THESIS FORM



Helen Hardin Honors Program

Honors Hall, 425 Patterson Street
Phone: (901) 678-2690
Fax: (901) 678-5367

Application Form for Honors Thesis

Semester/Year

Name of Student (please print)

Major

Student ID ("U-Number")

Email Address

Proposed Thesis Title

Department

Course #

Thesis Advisor (please print)

Expected Completion Date

Graduation Date

For thesis proposal approval, please obtain the following signatures:

Student Signature

(Signature)

Date: _____

Honors Project Advisor

(Signature)

Date: _____

Departmental Honors

Coordinator Advisor (if any)

(Signature)

Date: _____

Honors Program Director

(Signature)

Date: _____

APPENDIX 2: SAMPLE PAGES

<CENTER YOUR TITLE HERE>
by
<Type your name here>

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
Of the requirements for a Degree with Honors
(Psychology)

Helen Hardin Honors Program
University of Memphis
May 2010

Advisory Committee:
Tracy Russell, Professor of Psychology
William I. Spark, Assistant Professor of Psychology

ABSTRACT

Reed, Rasha M. Bachelor of Arts in Psychology. University of Memphis, May 2010. Physical Attractiveness, Body Image, and Women's Self-Esteem. Major Professor, Tracy Russell.

The current study investigated potential relationships between women's physical attractiveness, body size and shape, and self-esteem. Young college women ($N = 120$) completed questionnaires and were weighed, measured, and rated for physical attractiveness. Results revealed that self-esteem was unrelated to physical attractiveness and general body dissatisfaction. Explanations for this null finding are considered.

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APPENDIX 3: THESIS CHECKLIST

MARGINS: 1.50" on left side, 1" on all other sides

ORGANIZATION:

- _____ 1. Title Page
- _____ 2. Dedication Page (Optional)
- _____ 3. Acknowledgments (Optional)
- _____ 4. Abstract
- _____ 5. Table of Contents
- _____ 6. List of Tables (only for 2 or more)
- _____ 7. List of Figures (only for 2 or more)
- _____ 8. Body of Thesis (divided into chapters or sections)
- _____ 9. References
- _____ 10. Appendix

FONT SIZE: 10 OR 12

PAGINATION:

- _____ All pages, except the Title Page, should be assigned a number.
- _____ The preliminary pages (front matter) are numbered in lower case Roman numerals (ii, iii, and so on). The Title page is assumed to be page i, but is not numbered.
- _____ The main body of text, bibliography, and appendices (if any) are numbered with Arabic numerals.
- _____ Page numbers should be positioned in the same place, 1" from top right corner (including all preliminary pages).

SPACING:

- _____ Text must be double-spaced.
- _____ Tables, long quotes, and bibliography/reference listings may be single-spaced.

TABLES/FIGURES:

- _____ Table/Figures must be identified in the text by a number.
- _____ Table number and title must be typed above table.
- _____ Figure number and caption must be typed below figure.

REFERENCES/BIBLIOGRAPHY

- _____ References should appear before any appendices.
- _____ References should include all citations.
- _____ Citations should be listed alphabetically and should conform to a single format (MLA or APA).

THESIS BINDING AND SUBMISSION TO HONORS PROGRAM

- _____ Thesis should be bound with VeloBind, available at FedEx Kinkos.
- _____ Submit bound copy of your thesis to the Honors Program office.