

## HONORS COLLEGE THESIS GUIDELINES

### Goal of the thesis:

To allow students to work closely with a faculty member on a substantial project in their discipline. This project should afford students the opportunity to apply knowledge gained in their major and to demonstrate an understanding of the scholarly and creative principles and writing conventions of their discipline.

### Eligible students:

Junior or senior honors students who have completed at least three upper division classes. Non-honors students that meet the Honors College requirements (i.e., minimum 3.3 GPA and in good standing) are also eligible. Students who do not meet these requirements may submit a petition to waive the requirements to the Honors College Research Program Coordinator. This petition should include a letter of recommendation from the prospective mentor.

### Thesis subject area and format:

Thesis projects may include traditional scholarly writings (e.g., empirical research or a literature review) or a creative product (e.g., work of art, literary, musical, or dramatic composition and/or performance). Regardless of the exact format, all thesis projects must include a written component. The thesis must be conducted in collaboration with a faculty mentor and must involve more effort and sophistication than would be expected from a classroom assignment. Honors theses must conform to the same formatting guidelines as graduate theses/dissertations within your college. Although length may vary, it is expected that an honors thesis will be approximately 20 pages. Your thesis must have a title page with spaces for the signatures of your thesis advisor, the Honors College Dean, and the date. If you have questions about format, consult your advisor, the Honors College Research Program Coordinator or the Honors College Faculty Associate for Research and Thesis.

### Proposal:

The proposal is an initial outline of the project that you write in consultation with your advisor. It will likely be modified as your research develops.

Proposal forms are available on the Honors College [website](#) and should include:

- Description of the research problem or question, or creative concept to be explored in the thesis. Think of this as an extended thesis statement or summary of the project (~300 words).
- Statement of the method of study, theoretical approach, or creative media to be used.
- Bibliography of the principal primary and secondary works relevant to the topic, cited in a format appropriate to the discipline (e.g., APA, MLA, etc.). You need not have read all these works at the time of the proposal.
- Method of assessment of your work by the faculty director who will be working with you; specify how often and in what form assessment will take place—e.g., weekly meetings, progress reports, outlines, annotated bibliography, lab reports, drafts, etc.

- How your study will fit into your major's requirements and your overall degree requirements.

#### Research compliance:

Prior to beginning your research, you must get approval from the GSU Institutional Review Board if your thesis uses human subjects in any way (e.g., surveys, questionnaires, experiments) or approval from the GSU Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee for research involving non-human animals. Consult your advisor about this process.

#### Coursework:

Students must enroll in 4870 (1-3 CR) the first semester that they start their thesis and 4880 (3-6 CR) the semester they complete their thesis. These are graded courses (i.e., not pass/fail).

Your advisor will assign you a grade for 4870. Be sure to discuss with your advisor what kinds of tasks/assignments will count for your grade. Examples are an annotated bibliography, critical analysis of readings (written as well as oral), laboratory reports, test designs, models, quizzes, an outline of the thesis, and so forth. Evaluation of these items should be arranged so that you know your progress throughout the semester. At the end of this semester, your faculty director will determine whether your progress is sufficient to warrant a continuation of study beyond this first phase. Your advisor will discuss this with you and report the decision to the Honors College office no later than 1 week before the end of classes.

When your faculty director indicates that you are ready to proceed with the production of your thesis/project, you will be authorized by the Honors College Office to enroll in 4880. You will need to set dates when drafts of the thesis or parts of the project should be completed. Continue to seek feedback about how you are progressing in the thesis semester(s). It is important that both of you understand how your progress and final achievement are being measured.

#### Deadlines:

The completed proposal (including the signed Approval Form) must be submitted to the Honors College front desk by **April 1** for summer registration, **August 1** for fall registration, and December 1 for spring registration. If these deadlines fall on a Saturday or Sunday, then the deadline is the following Monday.

The thesis/project, approved by the faculty director, is to be delivered to the Honors College front desk no later than the **last day of classes in the semester you wish to complete your thesis/project.**

#### Honors College support:

Students participating in Honors Thesis are eligible to borrow a lap top computer from the Honors College for the semester, contingent on availability. Students may also apply for financial support to present at conferences and purchase supplies for their research. In addition, there are several workshops held in the Honors College each

semester to provide support to thesis students. The Faculty Associate for Research and Theses and the Research Program Coordinator are available to advise students and their mentors.

Questions:

Please feel free to contact the Honors College Research Program Coordinator or the Faculty Associate if you have any questions regarding any aspect of this project.

*Revised December 5, 2017*