# Table of Contents

Letter of Introduction ........................................................................................................5

How to Use this Handbook ..............................................................................................6

I. General Thesis Information ..........................................................................................8
   What is a Thesis? .............................................................................................................8
   The Honors Senior Thesis at a Glance ........................................................................10
      Sophomore or Junior Year .......................................................................................10
      Senior Year .............................................................................................................10
   Honors Thesis Overview: Option I, Option II, and BS/MD Option III ......................12
      Option 1: Honors Thesis in the Major ...................................................................12
      Option 2: HON 490/HON 491 ..............................................................................13
      Option 3: BS/MD Honors Thesis: Case Study .......................................................13
      Clinical Thesis Specifications ...............................................................................14
   Honors Undergraduate Research Award (HURA) .........................................................14

II. Getting Started .............................................................................................................18
   Starting the Thesis Project: Developing a Topic .......................................................18
   Topic, Audience, Purpose, and Style .........................................................................20
   Methodological Choices .............................................................................................21
   Building a Reading List .............................................................................................22
   Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Human Participants .......................................24

III. The Mentor Relationship ..........................................................................................25
   Choosing a Faculty Mentor .......................................................................................25
   Role of the Faculty Mentor .......................................................................................26

IV. Honors Thesis Requirements and Guidelines ...........................................................28
   Honors Thesis in the Major (Option I) and the BS/MD Option III .........................28
      Honors Senior Thesis/Project in the Major Form Sample ...................................29
   HON 490 and HON 491 Requirements and Guidelines (Option II) .......................30
      Honors 490 & 491 Senior Thesis/Project Agreement Sample ............................30

V. Writing a Proposal and Prospectus .............................................................................31
   General Proposal Guidelines ....................................................................................31
   Prospectus Guidelines ...............................................................................................32
   Literature Review .......................................................................................................34
   Progress Report .........................................................................................................36
   How to Write an Abstract ...........................................................................................37
Letter of Introduction

You are about to engage in the most challenging work of your undergraduate career, the Honors Senior Thesis. It represents the highest achievement in the Honors Program, and student work throughout senior year should reflect it. Students who complete their theses in the Honors Program describe it as the most exciting and rewarding intellectual experience of their college years. There is no substitute for doing original research, following the work of scholars in the field, sharpening writing and research skills, or building a mentoring relationship with a faculty researcher—all skills that will serve the life-long learner well in the future.

The responsibility sounds daunting; the process involves several steps to completion, but establishing a firm timeline will lessen the pressure. This handbook hopes to ease the transition between steps, and foreshadow problems that students can avoid. Contained here are samples of necessary forms, handouts on the different steps, and examples of student coursework. All forms are available on the Honors Program website under Documents and Forms.

How early should you prepare for the senior thesis? The answer is it’s never too early. By sophomore year, you should have an established rhythm of coursework. As credits accumulate, you should be in the process of selecting an area of interest and the appropriate faculty mentor to collaborate on the project. This is the first step: narrowing a topic and selecting a mentor. Thinking about this process even in the sophomore year could provide helpful foresight. The involvement of the faculty mentor will vary depending on the scope and nature of your project, but some schedule of correspondence should be established that is most beneficial to both of you.

Once you have completed HON 235: Research in the Information Age, you should have some understanding of what it takes to do original research and complete a Senior Thesis. The next step is registering for Honors Thesis credit. By then you should have completed all Core Curriculum requirements. The Honors Program recommends at least 21 Honors credits before selecting one of the following options: Honors Thesis in the Major (Option 1) or Senior Thesis/Project through the Honors Program: HON 490/491 (Option 2), or, for BS/MD students, a clinically based thesis project (Option 3). All options total a minimum of 6 credits and are taken in consecutive semesters. All students in the Honors program must submit a bound copy of their written thesis or project for display in the Honors Program library. In addition, the University Libraries post a digital copy of each thesis to a secure server to be accessed by authorized University members.

The steps in the thesis process are covered in great detail in this handbook. We hope this information aids you in timely preparation. The Senior Thesis represents the zenith of your undergraduate career. Enjoy the process.
How to Use this Handbook

The following pages contain general information, important dates and guidelines, handouts on the steps in the thesis process, sample forms, and suggested timelines. Past UNR Honors Theses are also catalogued in the Honors Program Library for students to consult. We hope this information clarifies expectations and provides approaches to aid you in the thesis process. The steps may seem long and involved, but breaking them down into manageable pieces will highlight the key milestones.

**General Thesis Information** provides an overview of the Honors thesis process, applicable material for all Honors students completing a thesis. It also previews the different options so that you will be sure in which set of courses you need to enroll. This section is divided into the following: *What is a Thesis?* defines “a thesis.” *The Honors Senior Thesis at a Glance* contains a diagram of Thesis Option 1, Thesis Option 2, and BS/MD Option 3 followed by a description of each thesis option. The final section provides guidelines for submitting an application for the Honors Undergraduate Research Award (*HURA*).

**Getting Started** covers the research process and topic development; it is valid for all students regardless of thesis option. Proper preparation means choosing the right methodology and building a reading list and working bibliography as early as possible.

In the third section, *The Mentor Relationship* is described. Every thesis requires the supervision of a faculty mentor; however, the responsibilities of faculty in different disciplines will vary.

More specific information relevant to the student’s chosen option can be found in the fourth section: *Honors Thesis Requirements and Guidelines*. General advice for all students is provided whether the student chooses Option 1: *Honors Thesis in the Major Requirements*, Option 2: HON 490 & 491 or option III, BS/MD.

The fifth section provides guidelines on writing the proposal, prospectus, and progress report and the requirements for students enrolled in HON 490 and HON 491. It includes discussion on writing a literature review and an abstract, while the sixth section assists students with general writing strategies.

Sections seven and eight cover *Finishing the Honors Senior Thesis* and provide guidelines for preparing an oral defense and submitting the final bound copy to the Honors Program.

**Documents and sample student writings** are available in section nine. The checklists in section ten are helpful tools for students to stay on track and complete assignments for HON 490 and HON 491 on time. Finally, the last
section establishes **the standards of performance for the written thesis and the oral defense.**

The goal of the *Honors Senior Thesis Handbook* is to provide a clear and extensive resource for inspiring success in students completing their senior theses. Understanding different options and requirements is important in establishing the best relationship between students and Honors Program goals. The thesis process is time consuming, but enjoyable; the skills you will hone in its completion will become valuable tools for more informed work.
I. General Thesis Information

What is a Thesis?

The Honors Senior Thesis can be approached from many different directions to accommodate the variety of fields in which students wish to work. For the journalism, health sciences, or business major, the thesis may involve a spectrum of research surrounding a selected current topic as well as the new findings that answer important research questions for professionals in their fields. Students of history, English, political science, and international affairs may answer the thesis question by working with primary documents or original sources previously unexplored by scholars. Psychology majors might approach the thesis by choosing experimental designs, correlational studies or surveys; and anthropology majors might observe and describe by writing a case study or naturalistic observation. Engineering-based projects are likely experimental or theoretical investigations that address a particular engineering problem of importance not only to the local community, but also nationally. Students in education might write a theoretical paper examining an issue or problem in education, or they might write a complete curriculum in a subject area of interest to other teachers and professionals. Students in the sciences complete a laboratory-based experiment or conduct field work. It is not uncommon, however, for biology majors to do an in-depth literature review of a substantial body of material on a scientific topic. Students of fine arts can fulfill the thesis requirement by creating original work in fiction, art, or music, as long as there is a written component and the writing reflects research conducted by the student. The bulk of writing completed by the student should be helpful and informative to scholars interested in the topic and, hence, should be fully documented and of a publishable quality.

The amount of research and writing will vary according to the student’s field. The English major who writes a fiction piece will perhaps spend more time writing than a student who completes a scientific experiment. A music major may conduct and perform a new piece of music. Art students can sculpt, draw, or paint to satisfy their creative desires. Students in scientific fields will be in the lab, conducting tests and experiments. The length and style of writing used in these projects will differ significantly.

Whether the thesis is scientific or creative, one definition that holds true across disciplines is that students must evaluate the work done in a particular field and seek to advance it with new findings. Every thesis should make clear the context surrounding the advancement of this topic; that is, what other research or prior work has contributed to the student’s area of focus? The project, then, will involve research and a body of writing, usually much larger than projects completed earlier in the student’s career. Texts will vary in length but should contextualize work within the field and offer critical insights into the creative
process. All thesis projects regardless of discipline involve critical writing components.

How long is a thesis? This, too, depends on the nature of the project. Experimentation-based (natural sciences) work will involve less text than others, and usually corresponds to the experiments conducted, with no more than what is necessary to elucidate those findings, ranging between 25–40 pages. More in-depth arguments based on evaluative and qualitative research (humanities and social sciences) range from 30–60 pages. A creative fiction piece could be upwards of 75 pages. No matter what the area of focus (or amount of writing involved), the written work should substantially show the student’s progression within their field in the form of a properly documented text that makes substantial reference to both primary and secondary sources.

The Honors Program Library contains a number of books on the research process, documentation style handbooks, and discipline-specific research strategies. Selected available books include:

The Honors Senior Thesis at a Glance

Sophomore or Junior Year
- Register for HON 235: Research in the Information Age
- Attend an Institutional Review Board (IRB) workshop
- Select an appropriate faculty mentor and discuss thesis topics, establish correspondence
- Attend an Honors Senior Thesis oral defense
- Complete Project Agreement Form with faculty mentor’s signature; student submits to Honors Program Office (Option 2 only)

Senior Year
- Formulate a plan of research
- Gather and sort sources by relevance
- Register for Honors Thesis credit
- Attend regular class meetings
- Arrange regular meetings with faculty mentor
- Apply for an Honors Undergraduate Research Award (HURA)
- Develop a two-semester timetable
- Review the literature
- Carry out your research
- Construct an outline
- Draft, revise, and edit the text
- Prepare for the oral defense
- Submit the final manuscript
- Celebrate
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Option 1: Honors Thesis/Project in Major</strong></th>
<th><strong>Option 2: HON 490/HON 491</strong></th>
<th><strong>Option 3: BS/MD Program</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Check the Honors Program-approved Senior Thesis Project in the Major courses</td>
<td>Sign faculty mentor agreement</td>
<td>Work with School of Medicine to select a medical advisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete Honors Senior Thesis/Project in the Major form each semester enrolled in thesis credits</td>
<td>Develop a research question</td>
<td>Select a medical condition for a case study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete thesis/project according to the course requirements</td>
<td>Sign up for a library specialist</td>
<td>Sign up for a library specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit an application for HURA funding (recommended)</td>
<td>Evaluate sources; focus research</td>
<td>Evaluate sources, focus research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write following proper citation formatting guidelines according to the discipline</td>
<td>Attend regular class meetings and lectures</td>
<td>Attend regular class meetings and lectures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrange oral defense time and place; notify Honors Program of the date; submit Oral Defense form to Honors Program office prior to the presentation</td>
<td>Write and submit structure</td>
<td>Outline chapter structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give oral presentation as required by the major; invite Honors Program</td>
<td>Write and submit proposal (submit a HURA application, fall only)</td>
<td>Write and submit proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit bound thesis/project to Honors Program office; follow Honors submission guidelines</td>
<td>Write and submit prospectus</td>
<td>Write and submit draft of case study</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty on record submits final grades</td>
<td>Honors faculty submits final grade</td>
<td>Honors faculty submits final grade</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attend Honors Ceremony</td>
<td>HON 491</td>
<td>HON 490 or BIOL 496</td>
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<td><strong>HON 490</strong></td>
<td><strong>HON 491</strong></td>
<td>Attend regular class meetings and lectures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sign faculty mentor agreement</td>
<td>Attend regular class meetings and lectures</td>
<td>Write and submit progress report or chapter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a research question</td>
<td>Write and submit progress report or chapter</td>
<td>Complete writing process; follow Honors submission guidelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sign up for a library specialist</td>
<td>Complete writing process; follow Honors submission guidelines</td>
<td>Arrange oral defense; notify Honors Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate sources; focus research</td>
<td>Submit manuscript to thesis committee ten (10) days prior to oral defense</td>
<td>Submit manuscript to Honors Program 10 (ten) days prior to oral defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend regular class meetings and lectures</td>
<td>Defend thesis</td>
<td>Defend case study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outline chapter structure</td>
<td>Submit revisions to faculty mentor</td>
<td>Submit revisions to advisor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Write and submit proposal</td>
<td>Submit bound final copy to Honors Program</td>
<td>Submit bound copy to Honors Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HON 491</td>
<td>Honors faculty submits final grade</td>
<td>Honors faculty submits final grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend Honors Ceremony</td>
<td>Attend Honors Ceremony</td>
<td>Attend Honors Ceremony</td>
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Honors Thesis Overview: Option 1, Option 2, and BS/MD Option 3

To be eligible for registration in the Honors Senior Thesis Project the student must have completed HON 235: Research in the Information Age and all other Core Curriculum requirements, including the Core Humanities sequence. The Honors Program recommends that students have at least 21 hours of Honors credit and a research methods course before enrolling in Honors Thesis in the Major credits or HON 490 and HON 491. Both options total a minimum of 6 credits and must be taken in consecutive semesters. If a department requires a senior capstone project, students may select either Option 1 or Option 2 upon approval.

Option 1: Honors Thesis in the Major

Students in majors that require a Senior Thesis/Project are not required to do a separate Honors Thesis project. Majors with only one class offering can take HON 491 for the additional three (3) credits. Students wishing to complete two Honors theses may enroll in HON 492: Advanced Research.

Honors Program approved Senior Thesis or Project in the major: ATMS 497 (6); BCH 407, 408; BIOL 496, 497; BIOT 447; For Civil Engineering: CEE 427 and one of the following: CEE 431, 443, 456, 481; For Environmental Engineering: CEE 456, 457; CHE 450, 482; CHEM 495, 496; CS 425, 426; EE 490, 491; GEO 497, 498; GE 483, GE 483, 487; HIST 300, 499; MECH 451, 452; MINE 413, 418; MSE 450, 482; PHYS 497 and HON 491

BS/MD students can complete the Honors thesis requirement a) by completing BCH 407, 408 or BIOL 496, 497; or b) completing the externship project in Elko and a research-based case study of medical condition. For the externship, BS/MD students must enroll in HON 490 and HON 491.

The student registers for the thesis classes and works under the supervision of a faculty mentor or advisor who corresponds regularly with the student and supervises the project for two semesters.

The student submits the Honors Senior Thesis/Project in the Major form to the Honors Program each semester the student is enrolled in thesis credits. All Honors thesis students are eligible to apply for the Honors Undergraduate Research Award (HURA) in the fall semester.

Once the student schedules the date of his/her oral presentation, he/she must notify the Honors Program and submit an Oral Defense form. The student defends (format varies by department) his/her work before his/her mentor, other advisors, Honors Program staff, and peers.
The student submits a spiral-bound copy of the written final thesis/project to the Honors Program upon completion by University Prep Day. The submission must conform to the Honors Program submission guidelines. With the consent of the student, the thesis is forwarded to the Knowledge Center to be archived.

Letter grades for each capstone class are assigned by the instructor on record.

**Option 2: HON 490/HON 491**

Students in majors that do not require a Senior Thesis/Project, or students who elect to complete their thesis outside their major must register for HON 490 and HON 491 in consecutive semesters. Letter grades for HON 490 and HON 491 are given at the end of each semester by the Honors Program instructor. Detailed descriptions of HON 490 and HON 491 follow general information on writing a thesis.

Students wishing to complete two Honors theses may enroll in HON 492: Advanced Research.

**Option 3: BS/MD Honors Thesis: Case Study**

Students who have been admitted into the BS/MD program have the option of conducting an experimental thesis in biology or biochemistry as outlined in Option I. As an alternative, students may conduct a clinically based thesis project by registering for Honors thesis classes: HON 490 and HON 491 (see thesis specifications below) or BIOL 496 and BIOL 497. In this case, BS/MD students must conduct literature-based research on a medical condition. These courses must be taken in the last two semesters of the student’s third year or before the student begins any work on the MD degree. These two classes must be taken in consecutive semesters. A letter grade for HON 490 and HON 491 is given at the end of each semester by the Honors Program instructor for BIOL 496 and BIOL 497 by the biology instructor.

Information regarding the specifics of a clinically based thesis can be found in the section on *Methodological Choices*. Students selecting the second alternative for their Honors thesis *must* do a clinically based thesis.

The student submits a spiral-bound copy of the written final thesis/project to the Honors Program upon completion by the end of the semester. The submission must conform to the Honors Program submission guidelines. With the consent of the student, the thesis is forwarded to the Knowledge Center to be archived.
Clinical Thesis Specifications

A clinical thesis is a written document that thoroughly covers a particular medical condition, disease, or medical phenomenon of interest. The topic should be narrow enough that it can be covered in adequate detail in 30–40 pages. For example, prostate cancer is too broad a topic, but a thesis on a subset of issues related to prostate cancer might be possible. There should be sufficient current research in scholarly journals and books.

Included in the body of a thesis should be the following:

- **Abstract**
- **Introduction:** Introduction of the topic, statement of purpose, significance of research question.
- **Historical Background:** Discuss the background and history of the problem/diagnosis
- **Review of Literature:** Provide a complete review of the significant literature published on this condition
- **Case Presentation:** After conducting a thorough investigation of the problem, assess and conceptualize the case; write up the case study: underlying symptoms, tests, plan for care, treatment, differential diagnosis, treatment, etc.
- **Discussion:** Address potential future improvements in diagnosis and treatment, and provide an analysis of the past innovations in diagnosis and treatment.
- **References**

Honors Undergraduate Research Award (HURA)

All Honors students starting their thesis research in the fall are eligible for the HURA, which is designed to provide financial support for individual Honors seniors who are working on original research under the mentorship of a faculty member, not for group class projects. The review committee does not accept multiple proposals for one project. The use of the funding is restricted and equipment is not an allowable expense.

Guidelines

The Office of Undergraduate Research and Interdisciplinary Research in collaboration with the Honors Program is pleased to accept applications from Honors students who are completing their Honors thesis to conduct research during the academic year. Honors students in all disciplines are eligible. Students with a current General Undergraduate Research Award are not eligible. The study
must be conducted under the supervision of a UNR faculty member and must be completed during the academic year. The funding for each award is up to $1,500 plus $500 per mentor (funded separately by the Honors Program). The project should be planned in close collaboration with a faculty mentor. Students may submit proposals to both the NSF EPSCoR and the Honors undergraduate research programs, but they may receive only one grant.

Research award recipients must prepare a final manuscript and present a poster or paper at the Nevada Undergraduate Research Symposium (NURS) held either at UNR or UNLV during the spring semester. The exact dates of these symposia will be provided to the participants. Both the manuscript and the poster/presentation should represent the research completed during the course of the funded project period. Award recipients and their mentors are also required to provide feedback on the program by completing a questionnaire provided by the Office of Undergraduate Research.

Applicants are required to submit an electronic proposal that consists of the following:

**PROPOSAL**: Each proposal must include the following sections:

- **COVER PAGE** Completed cover page form.

- **PROJECT DESCRIPTION** Limited to two pages; 12-pt. font, single-spaced, 1” margins. Must include the following sections and headings: 1. Abstract (50–100 words), 2. Introduction, 3. Objectives, 4. Plans for research and/or creative work, 5. Bibliography, 6. Two-semester timetable, 7. Plans for dissemination of results, and 8. Qualifications of the student. The proposal must be written in such a way that it is understandable to reviewers whose backgrounds may be outside the applicant’s field.

  - **Abstract (50–100 words)** The abstract is a summary of the entire thesis. It should contain the following elements: introduction to the topic; the research question; the methodology; and the significance

  - **Introduction** While the abstract (usually 1 paragraph) previews the entire thesis, the introduction grounds the reader in the project’s initial stages. The abstract should be concise in describing the entire scope of the project, while the introduction is longer and more detailed in orienting the reader to the project.

  - **Objectives** This section clearly states the specific actions that you plan to complete within the two-semester timeline. They must be measurable and tangible. Objectives are proposed outcomes of the project and what the student hopes those findings will contribute to the field of study. Each objective is usually written in the infinitive, e.g., to assess; to analyze
Plan of Research This section should illustrate clearly what the student hopes to accomplish in each semester: What works will you research first? Why are you beginning here? Is there an underlying logic guiding your plan of research? Does your Senior Thesis build on previous research that you have done? Describe this research and its relationship to your proposed project.

Bibliography Provide a few significant sources that relate to answering the question of your thesis. Follow APA or MLA style.

Timetable Be realistic. Is the topic sufficiently narrow that it can be finished in the time proposed? Anticipate how long the thesis will be and what you hope to accomplish. How many chapters will the thesis have? What will be the focus of each? What is the most logical order? This section describes how much will be done and when. Anticipate the organization of your thesis and its parts. Sound structure is crucial to the success of any large writing project and clarity in planning facilitates a focused and insightful conclusion.

Plans for Dissemination of Results Outline: Who will be interested in the results of this thesis? How will it contribute to the field, and what avenues may be available for publication of this work? In other words, how will the thesis be applied to the field?

Qualifications of the Student Remember you are an Honors student. Describe your background with the subject matter of your thesis. Briefly state what coursework or other relevant projects contributed to your particular thesis project.

- BUDGET Limited to 1 page. Provide an itemized list of all proposed expenditures. The total budget is limited to $2,000. Allowable expenses include materials, supplies, travel costs (to $750), postage, specialized software (if not already available at UNR), copying costs, etc. Purchase of equipment (e.g., laptop computers) and hosting is not allowed. Up to $500 of the stipend is allowed for faculty mentors. Non-stipendiary expenses should not exceed $1,500. Include a justification for each item. Travel expenses must follow UNR travel rules and a travel request must be submitted well before the actual trip (consult with your faculty mentor). All monies must be spent by May 30th.

- OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTS of work completed at UNR, including courses taken during the fall. Scan transcripts and include in proposal.

- SUPPORT LETTER(S) The proposal must include a letter from the faculty mentor(s) indicating their approval of the proposal and describing their level of involvement in it. This is not merely a reference letter. It describes the mentor’s endorsement of the proposal and student
in addition to committing to oversee the project. It should also indicate if
the mentor has directed any projects funded by HURA in the past 5
years and include the name(s) of the student awardee(s).

Questions regarding proposal format and contents should be sent to
ugresearch@unr.edu (consult www.unr.edu/undergraduateresearch/HURA.html).
The completed proposal must be submitted in a *single* PDF file by 5 pm on a
specific date at the end of September with the subject line reading “HURA
Proposal.” The **entire email must not exceed 5 MB or it will bounce.** Proposals
that do not conform to these requirements, that are late or incomplete will not be
accepted.
II. Getting Started

Starting the Thesis Project: Developing a Topic

Nearly all theses require much research before actual writing begins. What follows is broadly applicable information on researching and selecting an appropriate topic.

1. What is research?
Research is gathering information to answer a question that solves a problem that is significant to a community of readers. A research paper involves two processes: conducting the research AND writing the paper based on that research.

The research process does not deviate from academic papers and essays you have been doing. Begin by thinking about the paper’s purpose, audience, and topic. Choose a suitable topic, refine it into a research question, use search strategies to find sources of information, evaluate these, and take notes on useful sources. The only difference in researching a thesis topic is that the scope of research is often larger and more time-consuming. Theses require more history and context behind the topic. Students must consult primary sources and scholarly works.

2. Why write a thesis?
• To develop a better understanding of a topic
• To experience active learning
• To advance knowledge in your field
• To prepare for a lifetime of learning
• To enhance self-directed learning skills
• To sharpen writing and research skills

3. How do I develop a topic?
• Find a topic specific enough to let you learn a reasonable amount of information in a fixed amount of time
• Ask questions about the topic until you find some that catch your interest
• Determine what evidence your readers expect in support of your answer
• Determine whether you can find sources to support your answer
• Ask: Is the topic manageable, significant, and interesting?

4. How do I narrow my topic? From a broad topic to a focused one
Remember: Like your other papers, the thesis must be tightly focused. You will not be able to write on the city of Reno or the gaming industry; the topics are too broad. Instead, write on a particular aspect of Reno or a particular casino that interests you. After you have chosen a general topic, consult scholarly journals, books, and anthologies and search online to find the many ways that experts have
examined this topic. You would be surprised at the substantial number of works written even on the narrowest of topics.

Choose a topic that you will enjoy learning more about and that your reader will enjoy. Remember: If you do not take pleasure in writing about your topic, your reviewers will not take pleasure in reading about it; choose a topic worth researching.

Start with a broad topic, then narrow it down to a single main idea. For example:

**Level 1**: Broad subject area: English Renaissance Drama

**Level 2**: Topic for exploration within that area: Shakespeare’s comedies (*A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, etc.)

**Level 3**: Two topics for further exploration: Role of women and marriages

**Level 4**: Main question that concerns you: How are marriages handled in Shakespeare’s comedies or in a specific Shakespeare comedy?

**Level 5**: Reformulation into a research question: How do marriage events in Shakespeare’s comedies reflect the society in which he lived?

Your thesis argument will most likely change as you research more. Don’t worry! The question *should* change as you become more informed on the subject.

5. **Which questions do I ask? From a focused topic to asking questions**

The best way to find out what you do not know about a topic is to ask questions—first predictable ones, then less common, more challenging ones.

- Identify parts of your topic and how they interrelate. How is your topic part of a larger system?
- Trace its history and its role in a larger history. How and why has your topic changed through time? Has it changed with its own history? How and why is your topic an episode in a larger history?
- Identify its characteristics and the categories that include it. What kind of thing is your topic? What is its range of variation? How are instances of it similar to and different from one another? To what larger categories can your topic be assigned? How does that help you understand it?
- Determine its value. What values does your topic reflect? What values does it support? Contradict? How good or bad is your topic? Is it useful?
- Do I need to get Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval? All research using human subjects must be approved ([http://www.unr.edu/research-integrity/human-research](http://www.unr.edu/research-integrity/human-research)).

6. **To help organize your thoughts, fill in the blanks.**

I am studying… (What? your topic) because I want to find out… (Why? or How? your question) in order to help… (Who? your audience) understand… (How?)
Why? Whether? significance of your topic. Ask yourself the universal question “So what?” Why is your main question meaningful? What are the broader implications of your research?

Now ask yourself: How will I go about answering this question?

**Topic, Audience, Purpose, and Style**

**Topic** is the general idea that you are writing about.
- What am I writing about?
- What do I know about this topic?
- What do I need to know in order to write about this topic?
- Is my topic interesting, manageable, and significant?
- Where do I find information on this topic?
- How can I narrow this topic down to a manageable thesis question?

**Audience** is the writer’s readership.
- Who are my readers?
- Why are readers going to read my writing? What will they expect?
- What do I want readers to know or do after reading my work, and how should I make that clear to them?
- What is my relationship to my readers? How formal or informal will they expect me to be?
- What role do I want readers to play?

**Purpose** is the guiding principle for communicating something about the subject to the reader(s). What do I want my text to accomplish? A purpose can:
- Report the available evidence on the subject.
- Summarize or concisely state the main points in a text.
- Discuss main points or views on a subject.
- Compare and contrast the similarities and differences of two subjects.
- Define a term or concept.
- Analyze, identify or descriptively pull apart elements of the topic and discuss how they work.
- Interpret the subject’s meaning.
- Consider the pros and cons.
- Take a position on a subject and support it with evidence.

**Style** is the author’s manner of writing.
- A writer’s style is created through word choice, sentence construction, and critical thought.
- Consider your purpose and the style your readers will expect.
- Choose an academic style for an academic audience.

Be clear and straightforward. Avoid overuse of jargon and technical language.
Methodological Choices

The following are lists of possible methodological choices you might make to conduct research. Note that some tasks are common to all projects. All writers need to contextualize their project within their disciplines through a review of the literature, so all should include library research as an essential component.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scientific Thesis</th>
<th>Non-scientific or Discursive Thesis</th>
<th>Clinical Thesis (BS/MD)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Library research; Analysis of data</td>
<td>• Library research</td>
<td>• Library research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sample selection</td>
<td>• Interview schedule</td>
<td>• Analysis of the clinical relevance of the topic</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Human subjects approval</td>
<td>• Research on an existing theoretical model</td>
<td>• Survey and/or field observations</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Experimentation</td>
<td>• Application of a particular theory to a text or situation</td>
<td>• Description of patient(s) and/or sample selection</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Conduct survey; Field observation</td>
<td>• Development of a theoretical model</td>
<td>• Human subjects approval</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Write software</td>
<td>• Develop interview questions</td>
<td>• Preliminary observations and assessments</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Examination of documents</td>
<td>• Identify participants</td>
<td>• Development of procedures</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Apply standard methodologies</td>
<td>• Human subjects approval</td>
<td>• Consultation with medical professionals</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Note taking; Establishment of protocols</td>
<td>• Observations on site visits</td>
<td>• Statistical or other relevant data analyses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Statistical analysis</td>
<td>• Note taking</td>
<td>• Standard methodologies</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Preparation of questionnaire</td>
<td>• Use analysis software</td>
<td>• Examination of medical documents</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Internet research</td>
<td>• Textual analysis</td>
<td>• Interview protocols</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Quantitative research</td>
<td>• Prepare written report</td>
<td>• Internet research</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Field research</td>
<td>• Establish analytical procedure</td>
<td>• Quantitative research</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Qualitative research</td>
<td>• Field research</td>
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<td>Engineering Design Project</td>
<td>Curriculum Development</td>
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<td>-----------------------------</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Library research</td>
<td>• Library research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Address a problem</td>
<td>• Design lessons, assignments, tests</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Draft production process</td>
<td>• Gather information</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Gather information</td>
<td>• Gather materials</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Acquire equipment</td>
<td>• Assess equipment or technology needs</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Prepare models or prototypes</td>
<td>• Maintain a detailed log of time and tasks</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Prepare design drawings</td>
<td>• Draft and edit written report</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Examine existing models</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Maintain a detailed log of times and tasks</td>
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<td>• Maintain a photographic record</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Prepare written report</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Document references</td>
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**Building a Reading List**

Once you have settled on a topic, familiarize yourself with important works and leading scholars in the field by starting the process of assembling a reading list.
Your mentor’s expertise will be invaluable in compiling a reading list. In your weekly meetings, discuss possible avenues for research and gathering data. Your mentor should be able to provide you with the proper search engines, the relevant journals, and other foundational or influential names and studies. Each field has its own top journals. Ask your advisor which ones are relevant to your topic. An active student/mentor relationship will be helpful in facilitating the composition of a good reading list.

Consult reference librarians. Reference librarians in the UNR Knowledge Center specialize in specific areas. They are an excellent source of advice about highlighting recently published works, requesting research materials from other libraries, and ordering books and journals. Ask them for recently published guides to the literature. Some fields publish regular surveys or annotated bibliographies in which specialists evaluate recent trends in a particular field. Remember, Honors students should take advantage of the extended loan periods and specialized library faculty available to them.

Look at the footnotes and bibliographies of everything that you read. Find out what works leading scholars in the field consider to be relevant and worthy of citing. Select only those sources that directly influence your thesis topic.

Search for book and article reviews in your subject area. You cannot read every published word. Use this shortcut to see what materials are most important and relevant to your thesis. You should find brief reviews of individual books, longer reviews surveying major trends and comparing specific topics, and abstracts summarizing lengthy texts. No matter how useful the review, you must consult the original work. Not only do you gain a deeper understanding of the topic, but you will also be considered more credible.

Use primary sources. Do not rely on other scholars’ interpretation of or reference to primary sources. Consult original sources yourself. Rather than repeat the words and conclusions in a secondary source, base your conclusions on your reading of the original text. For example, do not cite your psychology textbook on Sigmund Freud’s interpretation of dreams; instead, read the original Die Traumdeutung (1899) or an English translation.

Use sources in a variety of media that explore the range of your ideas: books, journals, magazine articles, documents, video and audio tracks, and Internet research. Using different source materials shows how different media treat related ideas.

Avoid online sources unless they are solid and trustworthy (e.g. electronic versions of scholarly journal articles or peer-reviewed sites). Do not assume that, because something is published online or in another form, it is worth citing. Consult your mentor or a research librarian if you are uncertain as to the academic integrity of a source.
Assemble a reading list. Keep a list of the titles and include all the information you will need to cite them later. Make sure sources are relevant to major ideas or other subtopics handled in the thesis. Do not build an extensive reading list with irrelevant sources for filler value. As you explore your topic and are introduced to new books and articles, take good notes so that you will not have to hunt down the source again. It might be helpful to annotate each reading and compose an annotated bibliography for future reference.

Review the Literature. Familiarize yourself with the current scholarly research. A literature review provides the reader with a roadmap of the relevant scholarship that you consulted. You as the writer must show how your proposed project relates to other pertinent scholarly research and how the answer to your thesis question will contribute to the collective knowledge in the field. You must situate your proposed research within the context of existing scholarship, explaining how your project will build on, challenge, or go beyond existing research. A literature review not only summarizes other scholars’ arguments, but helps to provide the framework that sets up the importance of your project.

The literature review process begins with your research question. Choose relevant research databases and search tools to mine everything that has been written on your topic. Use keywords and subject terms for searching. Once you have found sources that seem pertinent, track the information to see how to access the source. Remember to keep track of complete citations. Once you have screened the article, determine whether the source is relevant and related to your thesis. Summarize and evaluate each, then synthesize the information into a whole. After you have reviewed a number of sources, start grouping the articles and findings by perspective, topic, findings, methodologies, approaches, etc. Look for trends, academic agreement, overall frameworks, scholarly camps, etc. Remember: The literature review is more than summarizing each article individually. You as the writer must present yourself as an expert in the field who is familiar with information related to your topic.

Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Human Participants

Research is defined as “a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge” (45 CFR 46.102(d)). “Human subject means a living individual about whom an investigator (whether professional or student) conducting research obtains (1) data or (2) identifiable private information through intervention or interaction with the individual.” (45 CFR 46.102(f)). If you are conducting research with human subjects, you must submit an in-depth proposal of your research project to the IRB, who has the authority to review, approve,
disapprove or require changes in research or related activities involving human participants.

Once you determine that your project requires IRB proposal, consult the IRB website (www.unr.edu/research-integrity). Complete the appropriate forms and gather the required materials. Complete the training for researchers (www.citiprogram.org/default.asp). After review by the IRB, follow the instructions in the feedback email. Make changes in your protocol if necessary. Only after you receive approval from IRB can you work with human subjects.

*The IRB review has many levels. Start this process early.*

**III. The Mentor Relationship**

*Choosing a Faculty Mentor*

The Honors Senior Thesis requires that the student work under the supervision of a faculty member. Especially in cases when the thesis is interdisciplinary in nature, it is not uncommon for students to request supervision from additional faculty with expertise in other areas. By junior year, students should have developed more specific areas of interest and interacted with faculty members they find particularly knowledgeable, engaging, and helpful. Once selected, the student and mentor agree on a project idea. The diligent student will select the research topic and mentor by the start of senior year.

How does the student select the proper mentor? What are the qualities of a good mentor/student relationship? The following are guidelines, not official rules.

**Ideally, the mentor and student should have worked together before.**

Think: which courses did I find the most interesting? When did I learn the most? What qualities in certain instructors improved the educational value of a course? Would the relationship from that class be appropriate for a thesis project?

**The mentor and student should share the same area of interest.**

Think: what particular courses directly contribute to my thesis project idea? How does my earlier coursework fit in with my overall goals of completing the thesis and obtaining my undergraduate degree? Were any of my professors particularly influential? Does any of them specialize in the topic?

**The mentor should have the expertise in the subject area.**

Choosing the right mentor to guide you in building a proper reading list and beyond is crucial. Try to match the project idea with a professor’s specialization, but bear in mind that not many history professors specialize in the Civil War, South Asia, and the French Revolution, for example. Think: How much does the
mentor know about my topic? Would the mentor be able to provide a reading list or direct me to relevant sources? Choose the professor whose specialization most closely matches your topic and with whom you will enjoy a good student/mentor relationship.

**The mentor should be available.**
Think: How much time will I spend with the mentor? One hour a week? Two hours a week? The right professor may be on campus, but may be busy with many other projects. If such is the case with your mentor, make sure your thesis work gets the attention it deserves. Choose a mentor able to engage in regular correspondence and a work schedule appropriate to the project. This traditionally involves weekly face-to-face meetings. In addition to personal meetings, e-mailed current updates on the project are also encouraged.

**Some avenues for finding the appropriate mentor:**
- Previous courses
- Current courses
- Department website profiles or individual websites
- Academic advisor
- Department chair
- Office of Undergraduate Research
- Other students doing similar research
- Past Honors thesis mentors (consult the Honors thesis library)

**Role of the Faculty Mentor**

The faculty mentor is invaluable to the success of the student’s thesis. Not all faculty members have supervised undergraduate research work, and not all undergraduates have worked on a research project under faculty guidance. It is essential that mentor and student have a clear understanding of their respective responsibilities and Honors thesis requirements and deadlines. Most importantly, both should understand the high standards the Honors Program sets.

**In the semester before undertaking thesis credits, the faculty mentor**
- Agrees to direct the student in the Honors thesis process for two (2) semesters
- Assists the student in developing a workable topic for the Honors thesis
- Agrees to sign a copy of the Honors senior thesis/Project Agreement Form (Option 2 and Option 3)

**During the first semester of the thesis process, the faculty mentor**
- Signs a copy of the *Honors Senior Thesis Agreement*
- Establishes regular meetings throughout the semester
- Assists the student in narrowing his or her topic or in selecting a medical case study
• Gives direction in writing the student’s proposal. When the student applies for the HURA proposal (in the fall), the mentor provides an endorsement letter approving the proposal, and describing her/his level of involvement with the project
• Provides the student with a suggested reading list of critical works and primary sources
• Establishes a preliminary timetable of dates for completion of assignments
• Reassesses the thesis topic regularly
• Reads student’s written work and suggests further direction or revision
• Suggests further research materials
• Encourages student to work with library liaison, Writing Center and other University offices
• Attempts to attend at least one scheduled Honors 490 thesis meeting with the student
• Reviews and signs the proposal, prospectus, and progress report (Option 2 and Option 3)
• Provides a final written evaluation of the student’s performance prior to the end of the semester (Honors faculty submit student’s grade)

During the second semester of the thesis process, the faculty mentor
• Establishes regular meetings throughout the semester
• Discusses and signs progress report or chapter
• Assists student in proper documentation style in the discipline
• Determines when the student’s thesis is adequate according to Honors standards
• BS/MD students: Determines when the clinical case study meets the standards of the Honors Program and the BS/MD program
• Reads and comments on drafts of thesis
• Assists student in meeting deadlines
• Attempts to attend at least one scheduled Honors 491 thesis meeting with the student
• Fully prepares student for the oral defense or the case study presentation
• Participates in the oral defense or case presentation
• Evaluates the written version and the oral defense according to the written thesis and oral defense rubrics included at the end of this Handbook
• Supervises any revisions required after the oral defense
• Contributes to the evaluation of the student’s performance (Honors faculty submit student’s grade)
• Works toward a final product that is error-free and conforms to the submission guidelines of the Honors Program
• Signs the final copies of the thesis prior to the end of the semester for submission to the Honors Program
IV. Honors Thesis Requirements and Guidelines

Honors Thesis in the Major (Option 1) and BS/MD (Option 3) Requirements and Guidelines

If you are completing your Honors thesis in your major (Option 1), you must complete the Honors Senior Thesis/Project in the Major form each semester. The Honors Program welcomes proposals from Honors students who elect to complete the Honors Senior Thesis/Project through their major departments. If a department requires a senior capstone project, the student can elect either the major’s option or HON 490 and HON 491. A student who elects Honors credit for the major thesis/project must complete the Honors Senior Thesis/Project in the Major form describing the senior capstone project. If the major requires two semesters of thesis credit, then the student must complete this form for each semester. The Honors contract requires a description of the project and a timetable for the completion of the capstone project. Students in majors that require a senior thesis/project are not required to do a separate Honors Thesis/Project.

To The Student: Ask a faculty member in your major to act as a mentor who will supervise your senior thesis/project. With the assistance of the mentor, complete the Honors Senior Thesis/Project in the Major form describing the project or research activities in detail and supplying a timetable for the completion of the project. Include both the names of the instructor of the course and the mentor. The deadline for filing the contract with the Honors Program Office is October 1 for the fall semester and March 1 for the spring semester. In order to receive Honors credit, you must complete this course with a grade of B- or better.

To the Instructor: In order to graduate in the Honors Program, all Honors students must complete a Senior Thesis/Project developing an independent, original scholarly or creative topic in the major. It represents the culminating experience of an undergraduate education. The thesis/project is not expected to be graduate-level work, but superior undergraduate performance is expected. The thesis/project is directed by a faculty member who agrees to work closely with the Honors student for one or two semesters.

If you agree to develop the senior capstone project as the Honors Senior Thesis/Project in the major, assist the Honors student in completing the Honors Senior Thesis/Project in the Major form. The Honors Program requests that it be notified of the student’s oral defense or public presentation. Honors credit is given only to students who have completed the Honors project and who have received a course grade of a B- or better. The Honors Program requires that students submit a spiral-bound copy of the thesis/project for archiving. The hard copy must conform to Honors Program guidelines, including original faculty signatures, and be submitted to the Honors Program by Prep Day.
Honors Senior Thesis/Project in the Major Form Sample

Eligibility: To be eligible for Honors credit for the major thesis/project, the student must be a member of the University Honors Program and have completed all other Core Curriculum requirements, including the Core Humanities sequence. The student may elect to complete the required Honors Senior thesis/project as a contract course in the major only with department capstone courses approved by the Honors Program. In such cases, the student must take a minimum of six (6) thesis/project credits as required for their major. The Honors Program recommends that students should have at least 21 hours of Honors credit before enrolling in the major thesis/project. This form must be submitted for each semester of thesis/project classes.

EXPECTED GRADUATION DATE

IF YOU PLAN TO GRADUATE THIS SEMESTER OR ACADEMIC YEAR, YOU MUST MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH THE HONORS DIRECTOR IMMEDIATELY. Complete the Application to Graduate online prior to appointment. *Students must also submit the University of Nevada, Reno application for graduation by Aug. 15th for winter graduation, Jan. 15th for spring graduation, and June 1st for summer graduation.

Student’s Full Name ____________________________

Student’s R# ___________ Phone ___________ E-mail ___________

Current Semester and Year: Fall 20 ___________ Spring 20 ___________ Major(s) ___________

Course Department ___________ Course Number ___________ Title of Course ___________

Instructor/Mentor Name(s) ___________ Campus Mailstop ___________

Instructor’s Phone ___________ E-mail ___________

Brief description of the Honors Thesis/Project: What is the nature of the capstone work? Provide a timetable for completion of work.

I agree to submit a bound copy of my Senior Thesis or Project to the Honors Program by Prep-Day.

Student Signature ___________ Date ___________

Instructor Signature ___________ Date ___________

Honors Director Signature ___________ Date ___________
HON 490 and HON 491 Requirements and Guidelines (Option 2)

If you are completing your Honors Senior Thesis through the Honors Program, you must register for HON 490 and 491. You will be asked to complete the following agreement and return it within two weeks of the first day of HON 490.

Honors 490 & 491 Senior Thesis/Project Agreement Sample
V. Writing a Proposal and Prospectus

General Proposal Guidelines

The proposal serves as a guide to focus and refine your thesis. It will also help the thesis instructor and faculty mentor understand your work and provide helpful feedback. The overall quality of the finished work will grow from writing a clear and substantive proposal.

The proposal should be roughly five (5) pages long, though length may vary depending on the nature of the project. It should be typed in 12-point font, single spaced, and have 1” margins.

The proposal should be written in clear, concise, grammatical prose. Writing in the first person is acceptable when discussing your own interests and plans; otherwise, the subject of the thesis remains the third person “it” (the research topic) throughout. Avoid the passive voice where possible. To organize paragraphs, you may choose to use headings to identify key sections and guide the reader. Paragraphs should contain topic sentences and be developed; paragraphs should not be overly long and ideas should be presented succinctly.

1-2. Abstract and Introduction. While the abstract (usually one paragraph) previews the entire thesis, the introduction grounds the reader in the project’s initial stages. The introduction is longer and more detailed in orienting the reader to the project.

The abstract in your proposal will differ from the abstract in your finished thesis. In your proposal, the abstract should be 50–100 words, while the version in your final submission may be up to one page long. An abstract is a short informative or descriptive summary of a longer report. A good abstract informs the reader of what to expect from the work as a whole.

3. Statement of Purpose. This section clearly states the purpose of your thesis. Provide clear and concise answer as to why you are examining this topic. Ask yourself the following questions: What are you researching or testing? Why is this topic significant or interesting? How can this contribute to your field of study? Is the topic sufficiently narrow that it can be finished in the time proposed? How will your research contribute to the field of study?

4. Plan of Research. This section should illustrate clearly what the student hopes to accomplish in each semester: What works will you research first? Why are you beginning here? Is there an underlying logic guiding your plan of research? Does your Senior Thesis build on previous research that you have done? Describe this research and its relationship to your proposed project.
5. Methodology. This section explains how you will carry out your research. How will you go about answering your research question? Does your research entail working with human subjects? Do you need to get approval from the Institutional Review Board?

6. Outline of the Work. This section anticipates the overall structure of your thesis and the relationship of its parts. A sound structure is crucial to the success of any large writing project; moreover, clarity in planning facilitates a focused and interesting conclusion. Provide a tentative outline of your thesis: number of chapters, major headings, subheadings, logical order of chapters. The outline will likely change as your project develops.

7. Timetable. This section illustrates how much will be done and when. Be realistic. Is the topic sufficiently narrow that it can be finished in the time proposed? Try to anticipate exactly how long the thesis will be, and what you hope to accomplish.

8. Approval Signature of Your Mentor. Make sure that your mentor has read your proposal and approves its content.

Prospectus Guidelines

Your prospectus represents a more thorough stating of your proposal as you move from a preliminary research topic to a more refined thesis question. The prospectus refines the scope and research questions, details where your work connects with past research, and reports progress and anticipated results based on work done thus far.

**Audience and Purpose:** A prospectus is a persuasive document that does more than just describe the project; it convinces your audience (i.e. your committee) that there is a need for this research. Remember that your audience and purpose dictate your tone. In the case of an Honors thesis, you should aim to sound academic but not get bogged down in jargon. Any educated person should be able to read your work and have a basic understanding of it. In addition, your tone should be infused with intellectual curiosity.

Repetition and clarity are the goal, so do not worry if you already mentioned something. However, be sure that you are mentioning it in a new context or in more depth than before.

A breakdown of page counts by element follows. All page counts given here are estimates, not requirements. The proposal should be a minimum of seven (7) pages long, though length may vary depending on the nature of the project. It should be typed in 12-point font, single spaced, and have 1” margins.
1. Introduction – one (1) page
Include one paragraph giving the broad frame or context for your research and one paragraph stating the problem that arises from this context. State your question and/or hypothesis in its “umbrella” form. That is, do not list all the little questions you must answer to arrive at the big answer. Describe your project in one paragraph. (What will you look at and how? In what context?) Briefly state your methodology. Finally, include a paragraph describing the results you expect and their significance. (How will the results add to existing scholarship or research?)

2. Literature Review – three (3) pages
Here you summarize, evaluate, and synthesize, but in greater detail than in the introduction, the published information related to your research topic. In a sense, you are writing the story of the history of pertinent research that leads up to your project. (How do you know what literature to review?) Ask your mentor for help deciding what research you should be familiar with. You are not expected to be familiar with everything ever written on your topic, but in every field there are certain names, studies, approaches, and trends that are considered foundational. In addition, your research should bring you into contact with studies and articles that helped shape your research questions and hypothesis; these need to be included. One way to think of the literature review is to present each study in terms of what it did and did not do, which questions it answered and which questions it raised. You can also trace the history of the problem. Be sure to respectfully critique the findings and methodology of existing studies so that your literature review points directly to your research and its significance. (What conclusion(s) can be drawn from the literature that you reviewed? What are the possibilities for ways in which the discourse can proceed? How does your research question fit with the published information on your topic?)

3. Methodology – two (2) pages
The methodology section explains how you will go about answering your research question and why you chose this approach and not others. Those doing empirical or quantitative research should be familiar with describing methods. Those doing textual or qualitative research should bear in mind that every researcher makes choices about which texts to use, what form to write in, and which theories to follow. Let your research questions guide your discussion of methods. (How will you answer your first research question? How will you collect your data/texts? How will you determine which data to select or exclude? How will you answer the second research question? Etc.)

4. Anticipated Results/Significance – up to one (1) page
State what you expect to find and its significance (by now you have done enough research to be on fairly solid ground). Explain who you think will be interested in your project and why. (How could other scholars use your research? How can it be applied? What new questions or problems does it raise? How does it help us rethink previous assumptions or see issues in new ways?) This section parallels the
literature review section, but whereas that section looked backward, this section looks forward outlining the contributions your project will make.

5. Outline – up to one (1) page
This partially depends on the conventions your discipline follows. If you are writing a standard scientific report, follow the traditional schema (abstract, introduction, methods, results, discussion) unless you and your mentor decide otherwise. Others will need to provide some framework, though this is understood to be tentative. You may suggest chapters, giving a general sense of what research questions each chapter addresses or you may choose to give a bulleted list that shows the logical flow that your presentation of the research will follow.

6. Timeline – up to one (1) page
Here is where you convince your committee (and reassure yourself) that your project is a manageable one. Work backwards from the date you need to have it completed (better yet, move your deadline up a week and count back from there). Keep in mind your overall schedule next semester when drafting your timeline. Your timeline should also reflect the research you have already done, tentative dates for completing each section or chapter, time for your mentor to respond to a draft, and time for you to revise.

7. Works Cited or References
Follow the referencing style your discipline uses (MLA, APA, Chicago, or other) and list full citations for everything you mention in your prospectus.

8. Approval Signature of Your Mentor
Your mentor must read your prospectus and approve its content.

**Literature Review**

The literature review process begins with your research question. Choose relevant research databases and search tools to mine for everything that has been written on your research topic. Use keywords and subject terms for searching. Once you have found sources that seem pertinent, track the information to see how to access the source. Remember to keep track of complete citations.

Once you have screened the article, determine whether the source is related to your thesis. Summarize and evaluate each source, then synthesize the information into a whole. After you have reviewed a number of sources, start grouping the articles and findings by perspective, topic, findings, methodology, approach, etc. Look for trends, academic agreement, overall frameworks, scholarly camps, etc. Remember a literature review is more than summarizing each article individually. You as the writer must present yourself as an expert in the field who is familiar with the information related to your research topic.
The review should lead to listing your research questions (more specifically than in the introduction) at the end of the section. Make sure you limit your questions; do not try to do too much. Good questions are simply stated, not easily answered “yes” or “no,” and lead toward investigation rather than foregone conclusions.

The literature review should be a flowing synthesis that grounds the reader in your research scope in order to understand how your project ideas have developed. The goal is to properly show the influence of previous studies or books that directly affect your thesis goals.

One method for tackling the literature review includes three steps:

- Write an annotated bibliography
- Organize the order of entries according to importance, and provide transition sentences that link each entry
- Synthesize the language of your entries into a literature review making clear the overall context for your research

A bibliography provides the basic details of a source (author, title, publication date); an annotated bibliography adds a summary, or annotation. The summary adds a few sentences about what the source accomplishes, its purpose, and its value to your thesis. Ask questions: What were the source’s scope and ambition? What particular questions were being raised? What is the significance of the source? How relevant is this source to my thesis?

When writing an annotated entry, include the following:

- Full citation using MLA, APA, or other discipline-based documentation style
- Summarize the source in 150 words or less
  - Describe the source’s content, purpose, or central theme
  - Note the relevance of the information and authority of the author
  - Indicate the intended audience
  - Explain the uniqueness of this source
  - Cite any weaknesses or biases

Treat each source separately at first and then connect each paragraph with proper transition sentences. The information in between should properly tie each entry together. Ask questions: how does this source support or refute other sources? How does it fit in with my overall research agenda? Foundational studies or books should probably come first when organizing the order of your source entries. The best strategy is order entries according to how each one points to your research significance.

Write the literature review as a synthesis of your research. As a model, use the annotated bibliography form with the proper transitions. The important thing is to make your language flow effectively as you move from one source to another.
Make sure the literature review elucidates which studies have affected your project’s anticipated outcome and how.

Include as many source entries as you think are appropriate for your project.

**Progress Report**

The progress report is a point-by-point discussion of the prospectus that describes the progress you have made toward the completion of the thesis/project. A good progress report thoroughly explains what has been accomplished and what needs to be done in order to prepare for the oral defense and submission of the thesis by the end of the semester. The finished progress report should be roughly as long as the prospectus, though length may vary depending on the nature of the project.

As you are now aware, the topic and scope of the Honors Senior Thesis usually undergo changes as the project evolves toward completion. The progress report should clearly reflect these changes and demonstrate how the project goals or certain parts of your work may have been altered. The following are reminders intended to answer more specific questions you may have as you draft the progress report.

**Introduction:** Frames the project’s context broadly and includes the major question the student aims to answer, a brief project description, and anticipated results/significance. Describe how these parts have changed. (What is the adjusted focus? Are the anticipated results different?) Be as specific as possible. Even if changes are minimal, be sure to note and explain them.

**Literature Review:** Includes a more detailed description of related research, and a history of pertinent research leading up to the project (foundational names/studies). A suggestion for writing this section is to draft an annotated bibliography as suggested above, which describes each source separately—what earlier studies accomplished, and the questions answered and raised. When discussing each source, make sure to show its influence clearly. That is, how does the source inspire the student’s work, and how does it relate in importance to the project?

Once complete, the annotated bibliography provides a solid structure for the literature review, in which there are important differences. A literature review is a synthesis, describing how each source relates to the overall quality of research completed. To draft a literature review, combine each individual description from the annotated bibliography into one body of evaluative writing. The key element here is writing the proper transitions between discussion of each source, which makes for flowing, organized paragraphs rather than choppy bits of information. What should result is a more cohesive, more detailed overall context.
In conjunction with the literature review, the progress report contains a working bibliography formatted according to the proper style.

**Methodology:** Includes a specific description of steps taken to answer research questions. How exactly will the larger question be answered? Make sure to cover data collection and textual analysis.

The progress report successfully demonstrates what data have been selected and excluded since the prospectus. Given the changes the project may have undergone, what areas have become more significant or, conversely, less relevant? Also clarify how the smaller, contributing questions are tackled.

**Anticipated Results/Significance:** Includes more thorough statements of expected findings and relevance to your field, and discussion of audience and purpose. (Who will be interested in the project as research, and how could it be used? What new problems/questions does the research illuminate?)

The progress report clearly outlines what the thesis will accomplish given new research completed and the findings that may alter your overall goals. Again, the key here is to be specific. A thorough explanation lends to a clearer evaluation of your work making the path toward completion more apparent.

**Table of Contents:** Includes a detailed chapter outline with appropriate subject headings. By now the structure of the paper should be nearly complete, and the table of contents replaces the outline given in the prospectus.

**Timeline:** Includes a log of completed research, and written chapters or sections. The progress report should realistically allot enough time for the drafting of remaining chapters, for your mentor’s evaluation, and for revision. Do not underestimate the revision process; revision is crucial to the growth of any writer. Learning to write well is a lifelong process, one of practice and trial and error.

The timeline should also include a schedule of your correspondence with your faculty mentor, and a projected time and place for the oral defense. Though the time and place specified may be tentative, you should have a firm date scheduled to submit the final copy of the thesis project to the Honors Program.

**Approval Signature of Your Mentor:** Your mentor must approve and sign the progress report.

**How to Write an Abstract**

An abstract is a condensed version of a longer piece of writing that previews the major points covered, and concisely describes the content and scope of the writing.
Think of the abstract as the writing’s contents in an abbreviated form. Abstracts are typically short, usually an average-sized paragraph (roughly 150 or so words). That sounds like a limited amount of text to describe your whole thesis, but a brief paragraph is enough to outline your major points or argument for the reader. The goal is concision.

**The abstract should describe**
- what information the thesis contains
- the purpose, main methods, and scope of the thesis
- projected (though possibly tentative) results

**A good abstract**
- is a unified, coherent, well-developed paragraph able to stand alone
- presents thesis information, purpose, and expected conclusions in that order
- adds no new information, but simply summarizes the report
- is understandable to a wide audience

**Steps to writing an effective abstract**
- note specifically the main points of your thesis and its purpose and scope
- use outlines, headings, and your table of contents to guide your writing
- write a rough draft, use general language, avoid complicated specifics
- revise the rough draft to solidify the structure, improve the transitions, omit unnecessary information and wordiness, fix grammar and punctuation errors
- print a hard copy and reread it to catch any mundane errors

**Examples of effective abstracts written by Honors Senior Thesis writers** *Note the presence of the qualities stressed above in the word choice and overall cohesion.*

**Example 1:** Darby Adams, “The Problematic Reception of Friedrich Nietzsche’s *Also sprach Zarathustra* on German-Speaking Culture and Society, 1890 to 1920”

Legacies of late nineteenth century philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche are commonly known: *Übermensch*, which influenced Hitler’s ideas, and “God is dead.” Many thinkers, including Nietzsche himself, claimed that these ideas were ahead of their time, and that Germany in its adolescence was not ready for them. Nevertheless, Nietzsche became known as a *Modephilosoph* (fashionable philosopher); so quickly, in fact, that most people barely had time to read his words. His true *Jünger* (disciples), however, took the time to understand Nietzsche and incorporate his ideas in their own art, music, and literature. This thesis examines the receptions specifically of Nietzsche’s *magnus opus, Also sprach Zarathustra* from 1890 until 1920. It looks at the literary elements of the text itself, showing their effect in German culture in general; and explores in more detail its influence
on works from artists, musicians, and writers such as Gustav Klimt, Richard Strauss, and Herman Hesse. (148 words)


Issues regarding homosexuality and gay rights remains one of the most contested and controversial around the world. Alas, in countries with high occurrences of discrimination, a suppression of such individuals’ rights frequently occurs. This study has two purposes. Firstly, employing a content analysis and factor analysis of the U.S. Department of State’s Country Human Rights Reports for the year 2012, it develops an original cross-national indicator which measures the level of discrimination toward LGBTQ persons in 52 areas of discrimination and in 178 countries around the world. Secondly, employing Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression, it examines a number of variables believed to affect the level of discrimination toward LGBTQ persons. OLS results indicated that countries with higher male populations and less educated individuals are more likely to have higher levels of discrimination toward LGBTQ persons. Further, countries with lower GDP per capita, poor human rights practices, high religiosity levels, and strong religious affiliations are also more likely to have higher levels of discrimination toward LGBTQ persons. Interestingly, when introduced as an experimental indicator in Model 2, results indicated that the greatest predictor of the observed level of discrimination toward LGBTQ persons in countries was societal attitudes (whether people minded having a gay neighbor). (203 words)

**Evaluating a Scholarly Journal Article**

Locating and evaluating a scholarly journal article is often a challenge for first-time researchers. Most journal articles, however, share certain characteristics and some of the same components. Characteristics of a scholarly article include:

- Original research, experimentation, new applications of others’ research
- Written work by and for experts in a particular field of study
- Material that deals with academic subject matter at an advanced level
- Written in a formal or technical style; language/jargon of a specific field
- Written by an established and credentialed author
- Accompanied by scholarly references
- Published by a professional association or society
- Refereed or peer reviewed

Basic components of a scholarly article include:

**Title and Author(s)**
**Abstract:** a summary of the article in one paragraph
Literature Review: a synthesis of the most important past works and findings
Methods: the methods or techniques the author used
Results: the data and main findings
Conclusion/Discussion: a summary of the findings, the explanation of the results, the importance of the findings
References: complete citations of works cited conforming to the documentation style of the discipline

Once you have selected an article related to your topic, critically read it for its meaning. Ask yourself these questions: Is the publication a respectable source? Who are the authors? Are they credible and respectable? When was the article published? Is it recent or does it contain dated information? What does the title convey? After reading the abstract, what topic is covered, what are the author’s purpose and findings? Does the article provide information about past studies? Is there a bibliography? How was the study carried out? What were the results? Does the discussion explain the results? How might the article be relevant to my topic? Are there other sources that the author cites that might be of interest to me?

VI. Guidelines to Writing

Organizing and Outlining Your Writing

Characteristics of an Outline
- General descriptions and headings
- A logical scheme
- A concise summary

Purpose
- To organize ideas
- To show the basic relationship between different sections and ideas and their relationship to the whole
- To define parameters and groupings

Constructing an outline
- Have a clear purpose and research question that can be answered by your research
- Consider the breadth of your research
- List the major ideas you want to explore
- List the smaller, sub-topics worth considering
- Group related ideas; arrange by general/specific characteristics
- Create main and subheadings

Outline structure
• Make sure headings and subheadings are parallel in structure; items of equal significance have corresponding number and letter designations. This organization helps to maintain an orderly and focused outline. The subordination of ideas must be parallel and organized from general to more specific.
• Make divisions clear and sharp to avoid confusion. Consistency is important to make the proper associations and to provide coherent, well-thought discussions or arguments.
• Maintain a consistent format. Either use complete sentences and correct punctuation all the time, or use only words or phrases with no punctuation.

A well-developed outline keeps the writer on task and makes the writing process much easier for the writer.

A Note on Plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined as “submitting the language, ideas, thoughts or work of another as one’s own; or assisting in the act of plagiarism by allowing one’s work to be used in this fashion.” (UNR Student Handbook)

Specific instances of plagiarism include copying articles from the Internet, buying or stealing a paper, and copying large sections of text from a source without proper citation or quotation marks. Plagiarism is a serious offense that can carry consequences such as expulsion from a university, or a loss of job, and an irrevocable loss of credibility. The main point to remember is to document any words, ideas, or other productions (images, illustrations, charts from TV shows, movies, and Internet sources) that have a source outside of your own ideas. Common sense or knowledge, myths, urban legends, historical events, and generally accepted facts do not require citation. The following sections discuss how to paraphrase, quote, and summarize properly. Whether you paraphrase, quote, or summarize, you must provide the source of the information and cite sources properly.

Writing in One’s Own Words

A paraphrase restates the entire passage in a writer’s own words. It is used when you want to make dense or confusing language easier to understand. The paraphrase is approximately the same length as the original or even longer. A summary is a brief restatement of the passage. It restates the central idea of the passage in a few sentences. A quotation is the exact wording from the original source, and is identified in the text with quotation marks and the source of the quotation. Use quotations sparingly; they are used primarily when an idea as originally written has the greatest impact and is the most memorable. Vary the use
of these techniques. Remember, do not change only a few words of the original source; you may be accused of plagiarism. Always provide the source of a paraphrase or a summary or a quotation. Note the following examples.

Original passage:
Students frequently overuse direct quotation in taking notes, and as a result they overuse quotations in the final research paper. Probably only 10% of your final manuscript should appear as directly quoted matter. There, you should strive to limit the amount of exact transcribing of source materials while taking notes. Lester, James D. Writing Research Papers. 2nd ed. (1976): 46–47.

A legitimate paraphrase:
In research papers students often quote excessively, failing to keep quoted material down to a desirable level. Since the problem usually originates during note taking, it is essential to minimize the material recorded verbatim (Lester, 46–47).

A summary:
Students should use quoted material to a minimum in their final manuscript (Lester, 46–47).

A quotation:
Keep in mind that when writing your final research draft, “only 10% of your final manuscript should appear as directly quoted matter” (Lester, 46).

Resources for Citation Styles

Every discipline has its own citation style, and following the proper guidelines is crucial in correctly documenting sources. As discussed in above, credibility can become an issue when it comes to giving the proper credit to your sources; the mode of citation is just as important. The most popular documentation styles are MLA for literature, arts, and humanities, and APA for psychology, education, and other social sciences. These citation styles and others are available as complete hard copy style manuals in the Honors Program Library. Electronic style guides are available at http://guides.library.unr.edu/toolkit/style-guides.

Editing and Revising

Do not underestimate the importance of revision in the writing process. Every good writer revises. This process involves more than checking for comma splices and filling the necessary holes; revising is an opportunity to re-imagine and perhaps reinvent the work you have created toward a more convincing end. The following are some strategies for making effective revisions.

Read the paper aloud or pretend to teach your thesis to another person. The difference in speaking and hearing your words versus just passively reading them
offers another level of interaction with your own writing. When you read aloud, if you happen to bump over a word of phrase that doesn’t sound right, then an alternate wording is usually needed.

Write down your thesis statement and check the overall organization. Keep your thesis statement or research question handy; refer to it often. Does your thesis accurately state your main idea? Is it well supported throughout your paper? Does your thesis need rewording? Are the paragraphs developed in a logical order? Are all the major points connected? Are the details sufficient? Have others read your work? Does the person understand what you are saying? Have you said exactly what you wanted to say? It is always helpful to have an extra set of eyes on your work. Choose someone who is familiar with the topic or find someone who is willing to critically evaluate your ideas. Consider visiting the University Writing Center. There is no excuse for typos, misspellings, and mechanical errors. Show the reader that you care: revise, edit, proofread.

VII. Completing the Honors Thesis

The Oral Defense

While oral defenses vary from department to department, all students are required to defend their work publicly before a committee of faculty directly involved with the project or who are knowledgeable about the topic. This exercise sounds daunting, yet the experience is a great achievement, as you will be the expert. It is your responsibility to be prepared to field questions with confidence. The challenge is to explain the essence of the thesis in non-technical, non-specialized terms or, in other words, to answer the “So what?” question.

Whether the student has chosen Option 1 or Option 2 to complete the Honors thesis, capstone courses usually require students to defend their work publicly either in a formal presentation, an oral defense, or a poster presentation followed by questions and answers. Seniors completing their theses through the Honors Program (Option 2) are required to defend their theses or projects before their mentors and Honors Program representatives.

Preparing and Scheduling the Oral Defense

The faculty mentor determines whether the student is ready to submit his/her thesis for an oral defense. If the faculty mentor thinks that the student is prepared to defend, the student must arrange the date, a two-hour time slot, and a place for the oral defense. The student should schedule early and confirm with the committee members well in advance of the oral defense date.
Once the oral defense date is set, the student must deliver the final draft of the thesis to the faculty mentor and the Honors Program representative a minimum of ten (10) days prior to the defense. Your defense will be based on this draft. Most likely you will be asked to make revisions (editorial, typographical, additions, etc.), so that this draft can be printed on high-quality paper.

Format of the Oral Defense

With mentor assistance, the student should prepare by considering:

- Use of PowerPoint? Many students present their research via PowerPoint. However, some professions do not look kindly on such an approach, and notes cards are preferred. Students should check with their mentors on the best way to present findings. The presenter should follow guidelines for making slides and carefully consider their use of fonts, color, graphs, etc.

- Audience? The audience consists of the faculty mentor and an Honors Program representative. Invitees may include other faculty advisors and professors, Honors staff, students, friends, and family. The student should consult the mentor for any restrictions on the number of audience members. The presentation should be given in non-technical, non-discipline jargon. Because the audience may not be familiar with the area of research, the student should communicate the message in a well-organized, non-technical way. The writing may be specialized, but the presentation should not be.

- Amount of time? The student is usually given 20 minutes to present the main argument of the thesis. Time should be used wisely.

- Questions? At the end of the presentation, the committee will ask specific questions related to the topic. The student may submit questions to committee members in advance. The student can then better anticipate the flow of discussion and strengthen knowledge in specific areas.

The following is intended for students in Option II, but all oral defenses typically involve the following format. Students should:

Step 1: Come prepared. With the help of your mentor, rehearse your presentation. Practice and time the presentation. Be familiar with the room and the equipment; wear professional dress; arrive early.

Step 2: Give your faculty mentor and the Honors Program faculty time before your presentation to discuss your thesis.

Step 3: Enter the room and introduce yourself: name, major, and thesis title. Introduce audience members to the Honors committee. You can explain at this point your interest in this research area and why you chose this topic.

Step 4: Give a 20-minute presentation or narrative about your thesis. Here is your
chance to shine. State your thesis and the question it answers. Discuss your methodology and data collection, results and findings and conclusions. Explain how your thesis contributes to existing literature in the field.

- What is the main argument of your thesis?
- Are you familiar with the work in your field?
- How does your thesis relate to other work in the discipline or field?
- Why did you choose this particular topic?
- How did you collect your data?
- How does your thesis contribute to the field?
- If you were to expand this question for further study, what would you do and how would you do it?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of your thesis?

**Step 5:** Field questions. Request the first question from your faculty mentor. Expect challenging questions, and even criticisms. Be confident; accept criticism graciously.

**Step 6:** Be prepared to say a few final words to close your oral defense

**Step 7:** Exit. Behind closed doors, your faculty mentor and Honors faculty member will evaluate your thesis and oral defense. Your thesis is evaluated as *acceptable* without revisions, *acceptable with revisions*, or *unacceptable*.

When evaluating your thesis and defense, the committee will consider the following:

- The significance of the topic
- The quality of the content
- Evidence or use of appropriate sources and reference materials
- The clear thought of argument and methodology
- The clarity of organization
- The quality of writing
- Evidence of careful thought and creativity
- Quality of scholarship and review of literature
- Bibliographic referencing

**Step 8:** Return for your evaluation and the approval of the thesis. The committee will discuss with you what revisions they think are necessary before you submit your thesis in final form. Your faculty mentor will decide when your thesis is ready to be reproduced on high-quality paper and submitted as a bound copy to the Honors Program. Refer to the “Guidelines for Submitting the Honors Thesis.”
VIII. Submission

Submitting the Honors Thesis: Steps to Note

For more detailed information on submitting a thesis, consult the online UNR Graduate School thesis guidelines: www.unr.edu/grad/forms

Paper, printing, and binding
- Drafts of the oral defense on regular (photocopy quality) paper to allow for edits and changes
- Final submitted copies on white, 20-lb weight and 25% rag content (or cotton fiber) paper
- Laser-printed and double-spaced in 12-point font, ideally Times New Roman

Title Page (unnumbered)
- Correct format for degree and major (i.e. Bachelor of Science in Geology)
- Thesis advisor’s (faculty mentor) name
- Correct date of graduation (month and year of graduation: May, August, or December)

Pagination: all page numbers are in upper-right hand corner
- Title Page (unnumbered)
- Signature page (unnumbered): original signatures of faculty mentor and Honors Program faculty
- Subsequent pages of Abstract, Acknowledgment, Table of Contents etc. are numbered in lowercase Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, iv…)
- Text is numbered in Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3…) beginning with first page of text and continuing through ALL text, appendices, tables, etc.

Margins
- Left 1.5
- Right 1.0
- Top 1.0
- Bottom 1.25

Spacing: Text should be double-spaced with the exception of captions, footnotes, long quotations, bibliographic entries of more than one line and materials in tables and appendices. (Follow MLA or APA formatting for the text of your thesis.)

Abstract: Summary or abstract of 100–150 words: complete and concise description of your work to entice readers into obtaining a copy of the full thesis; brief, informative (summary and overview of the facts) or descriptive (description of areas covered) summary of the thesis
Order of Contents

- Title Page (unnumbered) (follow sample provided below)
- Signature page (unnumbered)
- Abstract (page i)
- Acknowledgments (optional) (page ii)
- Table of Contents (page iii)
- List of Tables (page iv)
- List of Figures (page v)
- List of Illustrations (page vi)
- Introduction (beginning of text) (page 1)
- Text of the Thesis
- Bibliography
- Tables and Appendices (if appropriate)

Final Submission to the Honors Program

- Spiral binding is available at printing centers on campus (Learning and Resource Center, WRB 1021)
- Three copies of your final thesis must be submitted to the Honors Program with original signatures by Prep Day. It is your responsibility to distribute one to the Honors Program, one to the Faculty Mentor, and one to yourself.
- In the case of a group-authored senior project, only one copy should be submitted to the Honors Program for the group. The submission must contain all authors on the title page.
- A single PDF file (identified with your last name and title) on disk
- A signed waiver permitting the University Libraries to archive the thesis

You may also wish to have your personal copy case bound. Look online for inexpensive options.
Dream Weaver: An Exploration of Under-Water Basket Weaving
During the Twentieth Century

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Arts in Underwater Basket Weaving and the Honors Program

by

Wanna B. Dunn

Dr. Goddess of the World, Thesis Advisor

May, 2010
Honors Thesis Signature Page (Sample)

UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA RENO

THE HONORS PROGRAM

We recommend that the thesis prepared under our supervision by

{STUDENT’S FULL NAME}

titled

{FULL TITLE OF THESIS}

be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

{NAME OF DEGREE, E.G. BACHELOR OF ARTS/BACHELOR OF SCIENCE, MAJOR}

{FIRST NAME}, Thesis Advisor

{FIRST NAME}, Committee Member (if applicable)

Typed Name, Degree, Honors Program Representative (if other than Director)

Tamara Valentine, Ph.D., Director, Honors Program

{May, August or December, Year}
Thesis Proposal (Sample)
*Courtesy of Northwestern University

Josef Goebbels’s infamous propaganda techniques and unyielding control over the Third Reich’s media outlets has been closely studied in order to understand how National Socialism easily acquired a nation’s support. While Goebbels’ outlandish attacks on the subversive enemy and Hitler’s roaring speeches seduced the German population and solidified an anti-Semitic stronghold, only Julius Streicher and his notorious weekly paper, Der Stürmer, could cause die-hard Nazis to disassociate themselves from such a brand of Nazism. Its erotic imagery and deeply anti-Semitic quality appealed above all to the lower-class masses, boasting a high circulation from the Weimar Republic years through the end of the war. Because Der Stürmer sought to cement the concept of the parasitic Jew causing Germany’s misfortune, it provided a base for the escalation of anti-Semitic actions.

I would thus like to examine how this weekly paper evolved from its original purpose and how or if it escalated anti-Semitic rhetoric as it became clear that the Nazis would lose their war to the “enemy.” In this exploration of Der Stürmer, I will read, examine, and compare the articles and cartoons from the years of its publication from 1923 through 1945. By first analyzing the paper’s entire progression from a marginal to an influential publication, I can later more critically examine the period of my greater interest – the war years. I will begin in 1937, right before Nazi Germany began its expansion into Europe when Der Stürmer’s circulation was at its height. Through tracing the nuances of Der Stürmer’s rhetorical development as a parallel to the rise and fall of the Nazi party, I hope to expose how such a low-brow newspaper could transfix and hold a generation of readers who would become perpetrators of the cause.

First published in April 1923, Der Stürmer eventually became the “one paper Hitler himself claimed to read from cover to cover.” While other Nazi-published newspapers like Völkischer Beobachter and Das Reich covered world news for the Nazi “elite,” Julius Streicher and his Stürmer did not seek the higher ground, nor did it aim to meet journalistic standards. Through the paper’s virulent hatred, erotic cartoons, and articles about Rassenschande (miscegenation) trials, Germany’s least educated and lower classes found a comfort in the NSDAP. By 1937, the Nuremberg-based paper boasted a circulation of 500,000, a number still

Although Nazi propaganda is not the object of Hannah’s proposed thesis, she employs familiar examples of Nazi rhetoric (Goebbels and Hitler) to introduce her research subject. In doing so, she also establishes a compelling contrast between scholarly interest in those examples and the relative lack of attention to the popular publication she proposes to study. This opening strategy helps readers anticipate the more detailed discussion in the literature review.

With a focus on one publication, Hannah uses the background section to provide more to convince readers that a study of this particular periodical can shed light on the appeal of anti-Semitic rhetoric. As a first step, Hannah establishes the influence and wide circulation of the paper and gives a sense of its contents. These few details confirm that Hannah has done real legwork.

Hannah’s details demonstrate that she has thought carefully about her focus. Emphasizing how she will correlate changes in rhetoric with political and military developments in Germany, she establishes the significance of her research. Her focus on rhetoric in one publication makes the study feasible; her attention to its relationship to larger stories makes the study significant and relevant to historians’ larger questions about Nazism’s appeal.
misleading because many pedestrians could peruse the contents through special window-displays called “Stürmerkasten.”

Scholars have chronicled Julius Streicher’s public persona and his rise within the NSDAP. Randall L. Bytwerk’s book, *Julius Streicher*, confines *Der Stürmer* to a product of the editor – how he became the leading Jew-baiter. The book aims to find the impact of the paper, rather than the goal of the rhetoric. Dennis Showalter explains in [his] book, *Little Man, WHAT NOW?*, how *Der Stürmer* fits into a historical timeline of anti-Semitism, detailing each incarnation of the stereotyped Jew throughout its publication in the Weimar era. However, no scholar has traced the purpose of *Der Stürmer* and method of attack in correlation with various periods of the Nazis’ power – from its existence as a völkisch cult though Hitler’s *Machtergreifung* and the period of Total War. The scarcity of research on the topic is most likely due to the nature of the “unscholarly” material, but by examining the rhetoric, article topics, and cartoon subjects, we can begin to understand how “ordinary men” of Nuremburg and Germany could believe in the illusions of the Third Reich.

As I study the development of *Der Stürmer*, I will be asking several questions. Firstly, how does the NSDAP’s promotion of anti-Semitism, through the organ of *Der Stürmer*, change? Does the anti-Semitism take a different form depending upon the stage of the Nazis’ power or circumstance of the times like the Depression? What is the image of the regime that ordinary people saw? More specifically, how did *Der Stürmer*, or Nazi-supporters for that matter, publicly handle their imminent defeat in the war? How did the paper continue promoting anti-Semitism when the Jews had long been purged from the readers’ society? Lastly, why did the paper’s circulation drop dramatically during the war? Did Julius Streicher’s fallout from the NSDAP’s leadership noticeably affect the publication’s output or circulation? Is there evidence of any censorship imposed upon Streicher?

In order to conduct this research, I will rely heavily upon *Der Stürmer* itself, which is available in its entirety on microfilm at Northwestern University’s library. The front page stories and cartoons will be the focus of the research, not only because there are thousands of pages to read, but also because the front pages are what drew in its readers. In order to gather evidence about Julius Streicher and his paper’s readership, I will examine the transcript of his trial at
the International Military Tribunal in Nüremberg, read interviews conducted with Streicher, as well examine a compilation of readers’ letters to the editor. I will also search for studies about the paper’s circulation numbers and readership in order to understand the German public’s reception to Der Stürmer.

My qualifications and familiarity with Holocaust studies have prepared me to succeed in completing a senior thesis. I have excelled in relevant coursework like History of the Holocaust and German History1789-1989 with Professor Peter Hayes, and I speak highly-proficient German, despite only beginning to study the language eighteen months ago. Though I am not fluent and will have initial difficulty in reading issues of Der Stürmer, I am certain that with practice along with continuing to study the language for my minor, my German reading abilities will improve. I just returned from studying abroad in Germany, where I spent the summer at Berlin’s Goethe Institute and the following six months at the University of Tübingen. Throughout the eight months, I actively sought to learn Holocaust history. I visited Sachsenhausen with a Holocaust survivor, took a class in German called National-sozialistische Verfolgung und Vernichtung im deutschen Südwesten 1933-1945 (Nazi Persecution and Annihilation in Southwest Germany), and gave a presentation in German about persecution between 1933-1938. By the end of this summer, I will have also worked at two Holocaust museums. Two summers ago, I interned at Holocaust Museum Houston, where I gave daily tours to a wide-range of visitors. This summer, I have earned an internship in the photo archives department of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. I will have the opportunity to work with rare documents and photos and have access to primary sources that will undoubtedly be useful for my thesis research. After three months at the national museum, I will be more comfortable doing research in archives and using German in a historical context.

Writing a Senior Thesis will be central to my development as a history student and to my experience at Northwestern. Not only will I learn a more specific and in-depth aspect to Holocaust history, I will also use a medium that I love – the newspaper. Furthermore, this project will help me determine exactly how I want to continue in the course of my life – whether I want to continue high-level research in graduate school or whether I choose another avenue in life. Either way, I know this yearlong experience will be invaluable, academically and personally.

This discussion of other sources suggests other directions Hannah might take as her research develops. Her priorities are clear, but she has explored the topic enough to impress readers with her awareness of supplementary research to round out her main agenda.

Hannah concludes by emphasizing her plans to write a senior thesis, her passion for her subject, and the usefulness of the research for helping her make career plans.
Works Cited


*from “Senior Thesis Preparation Guide for Junior History Majors 2009”
Beginning of 2009 Portz Scholar Thesis

*The complete version of this award-winning thesis, and other past theses, can be found in the Thesis Library in the Honors Program Office.

University of Nevada, Reno

Costume and Propriety in Madame Bovary: la "Culture de Lin"

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Bachelor of Arts in French Language and Literature and the Honors Program

by

Erin E. Edgington

Dr. Louis W. Marvick, Thesis Advisor

Virginia L. Vogel, Thesis Advisor

May, 2008
Abstract

Costume is analyzed as a semiotic system in *Madame Bovary*. An analysis of mid-nineteenth-century costume and its relationship to propriety precedes a detailed examination of references to Emma Bovary’s costume in the novel. It establishes an understanding of the central role that costume played in regulating women’s propriety. The analysis of the text itself illustrates how Flaubert used this knowledge to infuse the novel with references to Emma’s costume that would have held readily recognizable semiotic connotations to contemporary readers in terms of their relationship to the character’s descent into debauchery. An analysis of two filmic interpretations of the novel that establishes the extent to which relevant costume details have been preserved in reinterpretation of Flaubert’s work follows.
# Table of Contents

Abstract .............................................................................................................. i
Acknowledgement ............................................................................................ ii
Table of Contents ............................................................................................ iii
Introduction ....................................................................................................... 1
Literature Review ............................................................................................... 2
A Brief Introduction to the Theory and Practice of Semiotics ............................ 7
Historical Realities of Costume and Propriety ................................................... 10
Flaubert's Scientific Style ................................................................................... 19
Costume in *Madame Bovary* ........................................................................... 21
Reinterpretation of Costume in two Film Versions of *Madame Bovary* .......... 55
Conclusions ....................................................................................................... 61
Works Cited ...................................................................................................... 64
Introduction

My thesis explores the semiotics of costume in *Madame Bovary*. Within the area of French literature, Flaubert is a canonical figure whose work continues to provide much opportunity for scholarly study. *Madame Bovary* in particular, as one of the most widely known and read works of the nineteenth century, has been the topic of much research exploring the realist style of the work, the astute characterization of provincial life it offers, or the character Emma and Flaubert’s motives for creating her. Indeed, the work has even been the subject of some research in the area of semiotics. However, within such a rich and complex narrative, certain semiotic systems have necessarily gone unexamined. I propose to undertake an analysis of costume within the work, which is one such system.

I hypothesize that references to costume within the text function as indicators of Emma Bovary’s descent into debauchery that would have been readily accessible to the nineteenth-century reader, but which may not be to the contemporary reader. This analysis is warranted, I believe, by the lack of a clear denouncement of Emma by Flaubert, which, given the outcry against the novel at its publication, would seem to suggest that the public created negative interpretations of the character on other bases. The treatment of costume within the work may be one such basis.

In order to execute this analysis, I will first assemble the population of references to costume within the novel. Then I will determine to what extent the specific references to costume contribute to an overall sense of Emma Bovary as immoral, specifically as sexually deviant or adulterous. This decision will be made in each case within the framework of my costume historical analysis and with attention to the possible artistic motivations for such details.

I anticipate finding that references to costume in *Madame Bovary* do function as a
semiotic system mirroring the progression of Emma Bovary’s character in the narrative. It seems obvious that Flaubert would include only those details that contribute meaningfully to the work as a whole; thus, it is unlikely that references to costume will be found to be unimportant within the structure of the novel. Achieving a better understanding of how costume functions specifically will enhance the existing literature by providing information on an additional facet of the structure of *Madame Bovary*, a goal that I believe is valid in light of the continuing scholarly interest in this text.

**Literature Review**

My project is primarily one of literary analysis; however, since significant portions of it are also dedicated to costume historical and semiotic analysis, it seems necessary to review pertinent literature from these areas as well. Thus, I will begin by discussing several pieces of literary criticism consistent with my research. I will then briefly address semiotic theory with regard to costume, as well as the relevance of costume historical studies of literary texts.

Ippolito’s article, “Flaubert’s Pearl Necklace: Weaving a Garland of Images in the Reader’s Memory” effectively conveys the idea that *Madame Bovary* is a work that relies upon symbolic detail, beginning with the scene in Rouen Cathedral, which, as the author demonstrates, symbolically foreshadows the coach incident that follows it (Ippolito 169-170). Ippolito actually states a central assumption of my project in a rather elegant way: “[w]hat appears … at the level of one sentence seems all the more relevant at the level of a narrative in its entirety” (170). Thus, details the reader might bypass as simply stylistic idiosyncrasies are actually significant. Indeed, Ippolito continues, “comparisons, images, and metaphors … have to be incorporated in the memory of the narrative … they are signs of its order, of the fullness of the text’s elaboration and, as such, they discharge a rich mnemonic function” (173, emphasis added).
X. Checklists

**HON 490 Checklist**

**Preparing**

- Select topic area
- Determine faculty mentor
- Establish times to meet with mentor regularly
- Develop research question and start building a reading list
- Register for and Complete HON 235: Research in the Information Age

**The Class**

- Submit completed *Honors Senior Thesis Project Agreement*
- Attend all thesis classes
- Attend required number of out-of-class events (see syllabus)
- Develop proposal
- Revise proposal with mentor; obtain endorsement letter (fall) or signature (spring)
- Submit proposal to HURA (fall only) and Honors Program (both semesters)
- Obtain human subjects approval if necessary (IRB)
- Complete a timetable
- Build a reading list
- Gather relevant literature
- Critically read literature, take notes
- Write bibliographical annotations of important sources
- Develop literature review and prospectus
- Submit prospectus with mentor’s signature to Honors Program (follow proper documentation style)
HON 491 Checklist

Preparing

- Establish time to meet with mentor regularly
- Conduct research, filter sources according to importance/relevance

The Class

- Attend all class meetings
- Attend required number of out-of-class events (see syllabus)
- Discuss progress report with mentor
- Submit progress report with mentor’s signature
- Write regularly, move from section to section
- Draft introduction, middle sections, and conclusion in any order
- Fill in research
- Write and revise; submit drafts of chapters to faculty mentor
- Write abstract
- Consult style manual for proper formatting and citations guidelines
- Submit final draft to Honors Program and to faculty mentor a minimum of 10 days prior to oral defense
- Schedule oral defense
- Prepare for oral defense: compose a detailed summary of discussion points and conclusions drawn from your thesis and develop possible questions
- Defend thesis
- Make final revisions and submit a spiral bound final draft to the Honors Program Office by the end of the semester
- Attend Honors Graduation Ceremony
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<td><strong>Develop</strong></td>
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### Honors Program Rubric for the Written Thesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NEEDS IMPROVEMENT</th>
<th>DEVELOPING</th>
<th>SATISFACTORY</th>
<th>OUTSTANDING</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Abstract</strong></td>
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<td>Needs improvement</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description is clear and concise</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Link to larger context</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Research Question</strong></td>
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<td>Research question is clear and concise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Topic is clearly contextualized</td>
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<tr>
<td>Methodology is appropriate and delineated</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Comments:**
- Please circle or check key phrases that describe the work. A rating of 4 is equivalent to Satisfactory.

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<tr>
<td>Evidence is clearly explained</td>
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<td>Support for argument or evidence is selective or inadequate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conclusion is clear and well supported</td>
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<td>Language is clear and effectively communicates ideas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Errors are minimal</td>
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</table>

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