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**HONORS**  
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## Honors Thesis Guide

HONR 399, Honors Pre-Thesis  
Fall 2009/Spring 2010

**Colorado**  
**State**  
University

# HONORS THESIS GUIDE

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## Introduction

The Honors thesis may seem like a daunting task, but with the help of the Honors staff and your faculty thesis adviser, it will be one of your most rewarding academic experiences. Pursuing a thesis topic of your choice is a wonderful opportunity to experience firsthand the creative processes that are fundamental to universities. You will benefit from the mentorship provided by your thesis adviser and the advice and support of your committee. Our hope is that by completing the Honors thesis, you will develop an appreciation for the challenges, complexities, and rewards of creative activities.

Many of our Honors Program graduates say that the Honors thesis is one of the highlights of their undergraduate academic experience. The thesis allowed them to explore areas of their most passionate interests, engage in the process of discovery, and work one-on-one with outstanding faculty. The Honors thesis has benefits beyond college as well. Former students have used their theses to gain entrance into graduate programs and to secure their first job after graduation. The thesis shows that you are creative and hard working – characteristics highly valued in today's graduate programs and the job market.

Common elements of theses include engaging in creative activity, using your imagination, pursuing your curiosity, developing a productive one-on-one relationship with your faculty thesis adviser, working hard and making a formal paper and oral presentation on your thesis work. There also is significant variation in theses. The thesis related to a senior vocal recital is very different from a thesis based on laboratory research. The thesis requirements recognize these differences so that you will have the flexibility to be creative in your own areas of interest and expertise.

The following is an outline of the typical thesis experience from beginning to end, although some students' plans will differ depending on their major, study abroad and internship schedules.

1. Students enroll in HONR 399, Honors Pre-Thesis (1 credit), a semester or two before they plan to complete their thesis. (Please note: Due to the nature of their academic programs, students in Human Development and Family Studies and Engineering should complete HONR 399 one semester before they plan to complete the thesis.) In HONR 399, students select a tentative thesis topic, identify a faculty thesis adviser, and complete their *Honors Thesis Preliminary Proposal*.
2. After HONR 399, students work with their faculty thesis adviser to develop the *Honors Thesis Formal Proposal* that is submitted to the Honors Program office. Students register for HONR 499, Senior Honors Thesis (3 credits) via RAMweb. The *Honors Thesis Formal Proposal* is due no later than the second week of the semester in which they are registered for HONR 499.
3. HONR 499 does not have regular class meetings. Students work with their faculty thesis adviser to complete their research/creative activity. Students submit a penultimate (next to last) draft of their written work to their faculty thesis adviser and committee; complete their formal oral presentation on their thesis; and then submit the final electronic and hard copies, which incorporates the recommendations (if any) from the thesis adviser, to the Honors Program office. The faculty thesis adviser determines the thesis grade based on the quality of the research/creative activity, written work, and oral presentation. The faculty member submits the grade with the presentation outline.

Since there is a difference in thesis requirements for Track 1 and Track 2 Honors students, you should be sure that you are aware of which curricular path you are following. Track 1 students take four HONR seminars which replace five AUCC courses. Track 1 students are not required to complete a thesis in the major (although most do). Track 2 students follow the regular AUCC and complete twelve upper division credits in their major. Track 2 students **MUST** have a thesis advisor in their major, or petition their department chair and the Honors Director to allow a professor from outside the major to supervise the thesis.

The information in the *Honors Thesis Guide* will help you navigate your way through the process of completing your Honors thesis. (An electronic copy of the *Honors Thesis Guide* may be found on the Honors Program website at [www.honors.colostate.edu/Forms/Documents/FA09\\_HONORS\\_THESIS\\_GUIDE.pdf](http://www.honors.colostate.edu/Forms/Documents/FA09_HONORS_THESIS_GUIDE.pdf).) It is not an exhaustive resource, so consult with your faculty thesis adviser or the Honors staff for additional information and guidance. This team of supporters and advisers is here to help make the Honors thesis a meaningful experience that you will reflect upon one day as a fabulous capstone to your education at Colorado State University. ***Good luck!***

<p>Honors Office B102 Academic Village (Building B) 970 491-5679</p>
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# Honors Thesis Timeline

## HONR 399 Pre-thesis Course

Preferably completed two semesters before the student intends to complete his/her thesis or one semester prior if in Engineering or HDFS

## Preliminary Proposal

Initial thesis proposal serves as the final project in HONR 399. It must be submitted by

**Fall 2009: 12/11/2009 in HONR 399**  
**Spring 2010: 5/7/2010 in HONR 399**

## Formal Proposal

Must be submitted to the Honors office no later than the second week of the semester in which you are taking HONR 499.

**Fall 2009: Week of 9/7/2009**  
**Spring 2010: Week of 2/1/2010**

## HONR 499 Thesis Credit

Taken the semester you intend to complete your thesis (typically the senior year). Register for HONR 499 during the previous semester's registration period and no later than the first week of the semester.

**Fall 2009: Week of 8/24/09**  
**Spring 2010: Week of 1/18/10**

## Penultimate Draft

Your thesis adviser and committee must receive a penultimate draft of the final written work by the 10<sup>th</sup> week of the semester in which you are enrolled in HONR 499.

**Fall 2009: Week of 11/02/09**  
**Spring 2010: Week of 3/22/10**

## Oral Presentation

Must take place by the 12th week of the semester in which you are enrolled in HONR 499. You should coordinate a date and time with your committee as early as possible. The student emails the Honors office at [Honors@colostate.edu](mailto:Honors@colostate.edu) with the date, time and location of the presentation.

**Fall 2009: Week of 11/16/09**  
**Spring 2010: Week of 4/5/10**

## Final Copy

The final copy is due in the Honors office by the last day of final exams week the semester in which you are enrolled in HONR 499. It should be submitted in both electronic and paper format.

**Fall 2009: Week of 12/14/09**  
**Spring 2010: Week of 5/10/10**

## Thesis Evaluation Form

Due in the Honors office within two business days after Oral Presentation but no later than the last day of final exams week

## Honors Thesis Overview

### Definition of the Honors Thesis

The Honors thesis is the quintessential capstone experience that allows students to explore academic areas of their most passionate interests, engage in the process of discovery, and make a creative contribution in their areas of interest and expertise. Although not specifically required to satisfy Track 1 thesis requirements, students are strongly encouraged to pursue a topic related to their major and/or career. If a student selects a topic outside of the major, the thesis must reflect the rigor and knowledge of a senior and not a novice at the freshman, sophomore, or junior level. Track 2 students must complete a thesis in their major which is supervised by a faculty member in that major.

The Honors thesis is a three credit experience supervised by a thesis committee of at least two faculty members (a faculty thesis adviser and a faculty committee member). The thesis has writing and speaking components. The writing component varies by the type of Honors thesis (e.g., research, design project, or artistry) and the length and style conforms to the accepted norms in these areas. The speaking component consists of a fifteen to twenty minute formal oral presentation by the Honors student followed by a question and answer session with the committee.

### Format of the Honors Thesis

Honors theses come in a variety of formats but all include a formal written component and formal oral presentation. The final thesis copy is discussed beginning on page 13 of this thesis guide. Those formats that do not include a significant written component *must* include a formal reflection paper (see page 14). The following formats have been utilized by students in the past:

- Research paper - This is a paper which includes first-hand data from experiments and surveys. It may include laboratory or field work and/or research including human subjects (with the guidance of an adviser trained in human subjects research and formal approval of the research project) by Research Integrity and Compliance Review Office [also for protections of animal subjects, ethical use of controlled substances, and responsible use of biohazards agents, and radon].).
- Scholarly research paper - A paper that uses original and secondary published sources to formulate a question and make a creative contribution to the literature. The paper may be a review and synthesis of the literature or an original paper.
- Business plan – Primarily for students in the College of Business. The student conceptualizes a business, including a plan for marketing, finance, and implementation. Students who are interested in entrepreneurship often choose this format.
- Portfolio – Primarily for fine arts majors. A formal compilation of a student’s artistry created as part of their fine arts classes. This option will include a formal reflection paper (see page 15 for more information about this paper).
- Education unit – Primarily for students who are student teaching as part of their education certification. Students create an additional (beyond what is required for student teaching) educational “unit” that includes lesson plans, instructions, and pedagogy. This option will include a formal reflection paper (see page 15 for more information about this paper).

- Fine arts display or performance - Presentation of a student's creative artistry (e.g., dance, music, and vocal recitals; art, film, theatrical performance, and photography exhibits). This option will include a formal reflection paper (see page 15 for more information about this option).
- Design project – Most Engineering majors complete a year-long senior design project (e.g., robotics and human- or solar-powered vehicles). Groups of students work together to complete projects which are used to fulfill the Honors thesis requirement. Honors students must submit formal reflection and individual contribution papers to the Honors office to satisfy the writing component of the thesis. Computer Information Systems students may choose this option to design and implement a database system.

### Coordinating the Honors Thesis with Major Requirements

Honors students are strongly encouraged to investigate linking their Honors thesis with major requirements such as a departmental thesis, design project, artistic project, research, and/or capstone. In some cases, a major requirement can be augmented to satisfy the requirements of the Honors thesis. It is important to note that students must include a reasonable “value added” component (additional quality work that fulfills three Honors thesis credits) to convert a major requirement into an Honors thesis; they cannot simply double count a departmental requirement for the Honors thesis.

If your department requires a group project/thesis (e.g., most engineering majors must complete a group senior design project), please refer to Appendix II (page 25) for guidelines about supplementing it with reflection and individual contribution papers to fulfill the Honors thesis requirement.

Examples of some majors that have made special arrangements to link major requirements with the Honors thesis include the following departments. (Please note: Departmental requirements change so you must verify these arrangements with your academic or thesis adviser.)

- Anthropology – Honors students who are Anthropology majors will complete the Senior Honors Thesis, HONR 499, in order to graduate. This will be undertaken according to the thesis guidelines outlined by the Honors Program, and the thesis adviser must be an anthropology faculty member. The Anthropology Department also has a Capstone requirement, ANTH 493, which is a one credit course. A student taking the Anthropology Capstone course must be simultaneously enrolled in one of the Anthropology 4A courses. (A list of these courses is available in the Anthropology Department office.) It is expected that Honors Program students take ANTH 493 and present the results of their honors thesis research along with all the other Anthropology majors who will also be presenting their research that semester. However, while Anthropology majors will be presenting research that is tied to the particular 4A course they are taking, Honors students' research will be based on their thesis research. Honors Program students will be graded for both their HONR 499 and ANTH 493 by the faculty member who is supervising their thesis.
- Art - The primary activity for the Honors thesis in Art is creating works of art in the student's concentration (e.g., graphic design, metalsmithing, or sculpture). The Honors thesis includes the student's portfolio, the seven page formal reflection paper, and the formal oral presentation to the committee.
- Biochemistry B.S. program - Students in this major must complete a thesis for departmental graduation requirements. Students may complete a research-based thesis (BC 499A) or a literature-based thesis (BC 499B). Track 1 students completing HONR 499 will fulfill the BC 499A/B requirement if they follow the Biochemistry department's guidelines for the written thesis and oral presentation. Track 2 students will register for either BC 499A or BC 499B and this course will fulfill the HONR 499 requirement. Please check with your BC thesis adviser for the specific department requirements.

- Biochemistry B.S./M.S. degree program - The M.S. thesis proposal will fulfill the Honors thesis requirement if the student satisfactorily completes the M.S. thesis, BC 699. Please note that students will complete their B.S. and M.S. degrees simultaneously. Please check with your BC thesis adviser for the specific department requirements.
- Business - Business students can choose a wide variety of options from design projects to business plans to scholarly research. For example, Computer Information Systems students may find an organization that needs a system and design a database and/or web interface for them. Accounting students have analyzed the possible implications of new accounting regulations. Marketing students can design an advertising campaign for a company or organization. Students from any concentration interested in Entrepreneurship can choose to build a business plan for a potential startup. Other students may want to work with a faculty member to gather data and analyze it for a research project. One student analyzed the types of documentation Information Systems groups used in industry.
- Economics - Three credits of Honors thesis may count as an elective in the economics block as long as it is supervised by a member of the economics faculty. Credit will be allowed for either HONR 499 or ECON 495 (Economics Independent Study) but not for both.

- Engineering – Honors students in the College of Engineering may use their senior design project (Senior Design I and II) as partial fulfillment of the Honors Thesis Requirements or do an Honors thesis that is separate from the senior-year project. Students who wish to use their senior design project toward completing the Honors thesis requirements must complete the project and augment it with a seven or more page formal reflection paper, a three to five page formal individual contribution paper (for group projects), and a formal oral presentation (refer to page 25). Engineering students should enroll in HONR 399 the semester before completing the senior design project.

*Civil and Environmental Engineering* has recently developed a detailed protocol for Honors students who wish to use their senior design project to partially fulfill the HONR 399 and HONR 499 requirements. Honors students should check with their thesis adviser and/or Professor Larry Rosener for specific requirements.

Students in *interdepartmental majors* or with majors in the departments of *Electrical and Computer Engineering or Mechanical Engineering* should check with their academic adviser for specific requirements. *Please note: Chemical Engineering Design Projects typically end too late in the semester to meet the Honors thesis deadlines (check with your adviser.) Deadlines for the Honors thesis may be changed with the approval of student's thesis adviser and the Honors Program.*

- Human Development and Family Studies –  
**Option 1.** A thesis is an in-depth examination of a topic; we strongly recommend that the topic be related to HDFS and fit with the student's interests and career goals. As noted on the Honors Program website, a thesis "provides students the opportunity to work one-on-one with a faculty mentor to complete original research [or] creative scholarship." Thus, students should decide on a topic area and then approach an HDFS faculty member in that area about serving as their mentor. The thesis may be an original research project the student completes, a study that is based on an ongoing faculty research project, or a creative synthesis of the research literature. HDFS requires majors who are in the Honors Program to use the guidelines we developed for HDFS 499: Thesis in completing their Honors thesis. These guidelines are on the HDFS department's P drive or available from the HDFS office.

**Option 2.** In the HDFS 492 Seminar, students complete (a) a grant and program proposal as a team, (b) an individual literature review that relates to some aspect of the grant, and (c) a group oral presentation of their grant and program proposal. Honors students may include the grant/program proposal and individual paper as part of a portfolio that also must include a five- to seven-page summary and reflection paper, and a 10-15

page analysis of programs that have addressed the social problem identified in the grant. The reflection paper should consider the experiences and insights gained from writing the grant proposal and from the dynamics of working on a collaborative project. The analysis of programs would review the literature on other programs that have addressed the focal social problem (e.g., teen pregnancy, child abuse, respite care). This analysis should describe other intervention approaches that have been tried in regard to the social problem, compare intervention strategies or approaches as well as the assumptions undergirding them, and discuss their effectiveness or impact. Given what the literature says about what works and what does not, how might this inform the intervention approach that your group has selected?

- Interior Design – The year-long senior design project undertaken as programming (INTD 400) and project (INTD 476), required of all ID majors, offers three options for the Honors thesis: a completely independent project not related to the design capstone topic, a seven page (plus illustrations/drawings) formal reflection paper (this option requires completion of the ID thesis by April 1) or a ten page scholarly investigation that expands upon a social problem related to the ID thesis, with illustrations and drawings.

Now is an excellent time to see if your major requires a thesis (or senior project). If it does, discuss with your thesis adviser how this departmental requirement (e.g., engineering senior design project) may be coordinated with the Honors thesis requirement. If your department does not require a thesis, ask your academic adviser whether the thesis credits may fulfill elective requirements in your major. If your thesis credits do not fulfill any major requirements, please notify the Honors Program office.

## HONR 399, Honors Pre-Thesis

The Honors thesis journey begins with enrolling in Honors Pre-Thesis, HONR 399 (1 credit). This course will help students to select a topic of study, choose a faculty thesis adviser, and develop an *Honors Thesis Preliminary Proposal*. HONR 399 is a series of class meetings and activities that will guide you through the requirements of the Honors thesis. The class will address the following areas:

- Selecting a thesis topic and thesis committee (faculty thesis adviser and at least one additional faculty committee member)
- Exploring the methods of creating your thesis
- Writing the thesis paper
- Preparing for the thesis presentation
- Connecting the thesis with your post-graduate plans

Grading for HONR 399 is satisfactory/unsatisfactory and your grade is assigned by the HONR 399 instructor.

### Honors Thesis Preliminary Proposal

The *Honors Thesis Preliminary Proposal* is intended to help focus your ideas and generate a thesis topic related to your final thesis topic. You will develop the preliminary proposal with your faculty thesis adviser, who must approve and sign it before it is submitted to your HONR 399 instructor. If you wish to change your topic after the preliminary proposal has been approved, you do not need to resubmit a new one because the *Honors Thesis Formal Proposal* will explain the new topic in detail.

The *Honors Thesis Preliminary Proposal* is the final project for HONR 399. You must submit it to your HONR 399 instructor by the date shown in the 399 class syllabus. The form is included in the back of this guide and a Word version is available online at (<http://www.honors.colostate.edu/Forms/forms.htm>). A typed copy is required.

After completing the *Honors Thesis Preliminary Proposal*, students should continue working on their theses by completing their *Honors Thesis Formal Proposal*. (The formal proposal is a more detailed, in-depth version of the *Honors Thesis Preliminary Proposal*.)

## HONR 499, Honors Thesis

You should register for Honors thesis credit, HONR 499 (3 credits) in the semester you intend to complete your thesis (typically your senior year). It is advisable to plan to complete your thesis in the first semester of your final year. **You register for HONR 499 via RAMweb. This should be done during the registration period in October for spring graduates or April for fall graduates. Your *Honors Thesis Formal Proposal* (complete with faculty adviser signature) is due in the Honors Program office no later than the second week of the semester in which you are enrolled in HONR 499.** HONR 499 is similar to an independent study in that you are working directly with your faculty thesis adviser to create the learning experience. Therefore, it is important for you and your faculty thesis adviser to outline your goals, timeline, and expectations of the thesis before the beginning of the semester. **HONR 499 classes do not meet on a regular basis.** Instead you will have periodic meetings with your thesis adviser.

To give you an idea of the hours involved, three credits are equivalent to approximately 135 hours of class meeting and work outside of class per semester, which breaks down to about nine hours per week. (This is the same amount of time any 300- or 400-level class typically requires.) As you can see, it will take a serious commitment of time and effort to complete your Honors thesis!

### Honors Thesis Formal Proposal

The *Honors Thesis Formal Proposal* is a comprehensive statement about your thesis topic and plans. Students should begin working on the *Honors Thesis Formal Proposal* soon after completing the *Honors Thesis Preliminary Proposal*. You will work with your faculty thesis adviser to develop the formal proposal and it must be approved by her/him. **It is recommended that you complete the Formal Proposal in the semester before you register for HONR 499. It must be submitted to the Honors Program office for approval by the Honors Director no later than the end of the second week of the semester in which you are enrolled in HONR 499.** You will find an *Honors Thesis Formal Proposal* form in the back of this guide. A Word document version is available online (<http://www.honors.colostate.edu/Forms/forms.htm>) so you can submit your typed copy.

**If you wish to change your topic after submitting the formal proposal to the Honors Program office, another formal proposal must be approved by your thesis adviser and submitted to the Honors Program office before the second week of the semester. Also, please forward changes in titles immediately to the Honors Program office so that the information is correct for college commencement programs and the Honors Graduate Reception program. Send title changes via email to [honors@colostate.edu](mailto:honors@colostate.edu).**

### Grading of the Honors Thesis

HONR 499 is graded on a traditional plus/minus grading scale (e.g., A+, A, A-, B+, etc.), and most students have received a grade of A+, A, or A- when they did high quality work and met the expectations of their thesis adviser. Your faculty thesis adviser decides your final grade based on the quality of your work and feedback from your committee about the paper and presentation. The formal presentation of your Honors thesis comprises ten percent of your grade and thesis advisers will use the form on the second page of the *Honors Thesis Evaluation Form* to evaluate it. (The *Honors Thesis Evaluation Form* may be found in the back of this guide and at <http://www.honors.colostate.edu/Forms/forms.htm>.) It is the student's responsibility to deliver the Evaluation Form to the Honors office within two business days after his/her presentation but no later than the last day of final exams week.

### Awards and Recognition

#### *Celebrate Undergraduate Research and Creativity*

The Honors Program strongly encourages students to participate in the annual **Celebrate Undergraduate Research and Creativity (CURC)** symposium in April. It is the umbrella organization for the following competitions: All-University Undergraduate Research Symposium, Undergraduate Art Exhibition, Dance Concert, Theater Production, Creative Writing, Music Concerts, Engineering Days, and Design and Merchandising Fashion Show. Although participation in CURC does not fulfill any of the Honors thesis

requirements, prizes for the best creative works or research are awarded and Honors students typically have won more than half of the top awards. For more information, visit the Celebrate Undergraduate Research and Creativity website at <http://curc.colostate.edu/>.

## Honors Thesis Adviser and Committee

### Honors Thesis Adviser Selection and Responsibilities

Selecting a faculty thesis adviser is as important as selecting a topic. You will work very closely with your adviser throughout the thesis experience, relying on him or her to guide the direction of your creative work, review and edit your writing, assist you with preparing for the thesis presentation, and advise you on everything from statistical analyses to the font of your final copy. Therefore, choose wisely! Do you like this individual on a personal basis? Will he or she be a good coach and supporter? Is this person easily accessible in terms of scheduling appointments and responding to phone calls or email? Are you excited by the prospect of learning under his or her guidance? Is this person knowledgeable in the area of your topic? Questions like these will help you find a faculty thesis adviser who not only fits your academic interests but also your personal needs and preferences. The thesis adviser is the person responsible for regularly meeting with the Honors student, the content of the thesis, and the final grade. The committee member offers comments and support, but the thesis adviser has the final say on the outcome and grade of the project.

Finding a faculty thesis adviser can be intimidating for students, especially if they have not had the opportunity to interact with faculty outside of the classroom setting. But once you start talking to faculty about your ideas and asking them for guidance, you will most likely be met with enthusiasm and a willingness to help. To start your search for a faculty thesis adviser, think of professors who have taught classes that you find interesting or with whom you have worked in other settings. You can search department websites to learn about faculty and their areas of interest/research. A potential thesis adviser should be listed on the departmental website as Assistant, Associate, Professor, or Professor Emeritus. If (refer to box below) the person you want to be your thesis adviser does not have one of these formal designations, that person will need approval from the department chair. **Students should e-mail Bob Keller at [Robert.Keller@ColoState.Edu](mailto:Robert.Keller@ColoState.Edu) with the name of the preferred thesis adviser, department, thesis title, a brief description of the project, and why you have selected this individual. He will contact the department chair for departmental approval.**

It is helpful to meet one-on-one with potential thesis advisers because you will get a better feel for their personalities and interests. Explain the concept of the Honors thesis, articulate your expectations for their participation, and give them a copy of the *Thesis Advisor Guide* (available in the Honors office) and the *Honors Thesis Guide*, which is available in the Honors Program office and on the Honors website at [http://www.honors.colostate.edu/Forms/Documents/FA09\\_HONORS\\_THESIS\\_GUIDE.pdf](http://www.honors.colostate.edu/Forms/Documents/FA09_HONORS_THESIS_GUIDE.pdf). The faculty thesis adviser's responsibilities require that he or she meet with you several times to discuss ideas and review drafts of your work. The faculty thesis adviser will assign your HONR 499 grade based on the quality of your research/creative activity, written work, and oral presentation.

### To be a faculty thesis adviser, he or she must:

- 1.) Work at Colorado State University as a regular full-time, regular part-time, or transitional academic faculty member above the rank of instructor (Assistant, Associate, Professor, or Professor Emeritus)
- 2.) Have attained a doctorate (Ph.D.) or the terminal degree in his or her field
- 3.) Be on campus during the semester in which you are completing your research (e.g., not on sabbatical leave)
- 4.) Be familiar with the Thesis Advisor Guide and the Honors thesis requirements ([http://www.honors.colostate.edu/Forms/Documents/FA09\\_HONORS\\_THESIS\\_GUIDE.pdf](http://www.honors.colostate.edu/Forms/Documents/FA09_HONORS_THESIS_GUIDE.pdf))
- 5.) For Track 2 students, the thesis advisor must be a faculty member in the department of your major.

***Exceptions to these criteria must be approved by the academic department chair and the Honors Program Director.***

### Committee Member(s) Selection and Responsibilities

The thesis committee consists of your faculty thesis adviser and at least one other faculty member. You and your faculty thesis adviser will select the additional committee member(s). The committee member(s) will serve as a resource, review the penultimate draft of your paper, forward comments to the faculty thesis adviser, participate in the thesis presentation, discuss recommendations for the final grade with the faculty thesis adviser, give you feedback on your presentation, and sign the affirmation statement on the Honors Thesis Evaluation form. The thesis adviser makes the final decision about recommendations and the final thesis grade.

#### To be a committee member, he or she must:

- 1.) Work at Colorado State University as a regular full-time, regular part-time, or transitional academic faculty member above the rank of instructor (Assistant, Associate, Professor, or Professor Emeritus)
- 2.) Have attained a doctorate (Ph.D.) or the terminal degree in his or her field
- 3.) Be on campus during the semester in which you are completing your research (e.g., not on leave)
- 4.) Be familiar with the Honors thesis requirements ([http://www.honors.colostate.edu/Forms/Documents/FA09\\_HONORS\\_THESIS\\_GUIDE.pdf](http://www.honors.colostate.edu/Forms/Documents/FA09_HONORS_THESIS_GUIDE.pdf))

*Exceptions to these criteria must be approved by the thesis adviser, and the Honors Program Director.*

## **Thesis Topics and Methods**

### Selecting a Creative Activity and Topic

Completing a thesis is a rigorous and time-consuming endeavor, so you should select a topic that is intellectually exciting, challenging, and fun. The following are some helpful hints about finding and choosing a topic:

- You can start a “topics file” where you keep track of potential areas of interest. Occasionally review your file to see if there are recurrent themes to your interests.
- For class paper assignments, choose topics that are potential thesis ideas and use them to explore the ideas further.
- Ask yourself the following questions: What courses have most engaged me? What am I most curious about? What do I enjoy? What academic interests am I most passionate about?
- Visit with faculty and discuss ideas with them. They have a great deal of experience and knowledge that may help you discover a topic.
- Many students are engaged in undergraduate research and this may make the selection of an Honors thesis topic and adviser a clear choice.
- One of the best ways to select a thesis topic is to select your adviser first and work with this person on an area related to his/her own research interests.
- Students in majors that require year long design projects (e.g., Engineering) will fulfill the Honors Thesis by completing a formal reflection paper and an individual contributions paper if participating in a group project.

The following list of Honors thesis titles is only a sample of what has been completed over the past few years. **We encourage you to visit the Honors Program office and read through past Honors theses to get a better feel for the thesis project. A sample list of thesis titles appears below.**

- Spin Effects on the Flight of a Volleyball
- PAYA: A Political Party for Apathetic Young Adults
- Modifications to a Cupola Furnace

- For the Love of Reading: The Use of Book Clubs in High School English Classrooms
- Diseno y Yo (Design and I) A fusion of graphic styles
- Insulin Resistance: An outdated genetic adaptation in horses and humans?
- Good Samaritan Urban Search and Rescue Robot
- Unlocking the Consumer Mind: Do Colors and Fonts Truly Matter?
- An Opportunity Analysis for Importing Fijian Beer
- In Pursuit of Flux: A collection of short stories
- Amendment 41: The Unintended Consequences
- The Jim Cramer, Mad Money Portfolio Strategy
- Portfolio of an Intern
- The Effectiveness of a Wellness Program
- Time is Money
- Marketing to GenX – A Comparison to the Baby Boomers
- Design and Implementation of an on-line System for Ordering Food Baskets
- Lethal White and Pompes: Genetic Diseases in Livestock
- Designing Programs to Improve Educational Achievement in Disadvantaged Youth Through the Boys and Girls Clubs of Larimer County
- Conspiracy Theories as an American Political Phenomenon
- Beyond the Green Room: An Investigation of Sustainable Opportunities in Reforming Arts Facilities

A list of topics by major appears on the Honors website at

[http://www.honors.colostate.edu/Forms/Documents/thesis\\_titles\\_by\\_major.pdf](http://www.honors.colostate.edu/Forms/Documents/thesis_titles_by_major.pdf).

### Thesis Methods

Research, design projects, artistry, and scholarship methods and approaches vary. Therefore, it is important to meet with your faculty thesis adviser to discuss accepted guidelines for your thesis area. Excellent resources for research and the writing process are available at the Writing Center website (<http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/>).

If you are involved with undergraduate research and plan to use your research for your Honors thesis, please clearly outline the expectations of your thesis with your faculty adviser. Without defined expectations, students who have been working in labs for extended periods of time (e.g., four years) may find that their faculty adviser expects them to incorporate four years of research activity into the Honors thesis.

Please remember that your thesis can be used for strategic purposes such as highlighting your talents, abilities, and expertise for graduate programs or job searches.

## Writing the Honors Thesis

### Writing Styles

Specific writing styles vary by discipline, so you should consult with your faculty thesis adviser for guidance about the writing style appropriate for your topic and audience. For each style, there are manuals to help you understand and stay within the boundaries of your discipline. In addition, the Writing Center has writing guides available at <http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/>.

The written component of the thesis experience must incorporate the fundamentals of writing that you have learned in your Honors seminars. You need to pay particular attention to:

- organizing your writing for your particular audience;
- engaging in writing as a process which includes formal and informal writing, and writing multiple drafts that are reviewed and subsequently revised;

- utilizing the writing expertise you have learned while writing summaries, syntheses, evaluations, and arguments in your Honors seminars;
- strategizing for cohesion;
- editing and proofreading; and
- utilizing appropriate documentation styles.

Finally, a thesaurus and dictionary are essential tools to good writing. Comic and sometimes tragic results come from relying solely on your computer spell check. Although spell checking is invaluable, it is not foolproof. The following poem, “Ode to the Spell Checker,” demonstrates this point.

## Ode to the Spell Checker

By David Burnham

I have a spelling checker  
 It came with my PC  
 It plane lee marks four my revue  
 Miss steaks aye can knot sea.  
 Eye ran this poem threw it,  
 Your sure reel glad two no.  
 Its vary polished in it's weigh  
 My checker tolled me sew.

A checker is a bless sing,  
 It freeze yew lodes of thyme.  
 Each frays come posed up on my screen  
 Eye trussed too bee a joule  
 The checker pour o'er every word  
 To cheque sum spelling rule.

Be fore a veiling checkers  
 Hour spelling mite decline,  
 And if were lacks or have a laps,  
 We wood be maid to wine.  
 Butt now bee cause my spelling  
 Is checked with such grate flare,  
 Their are know faults with in my cite,  
 Of non eye am a wear.

### Penultimate Thesis Draft

Students submit the penultimate (next to the last) draft of their thesis to their committee **by the 10<sup>th</sup> week before the thesis presentation (by the 12<sup>th</sup> week)** so that the committee has time to review it prior to the presentation. **Due dates are listed on the page titled “Honors Thesis Timeline” at the front of this guide.** The thesis adviser will compile comments and feedback given by the committee and forward them to the student after the thesis presentation. The student will incorporate changes (if any) made by the faculty thesis adviser into the final thesis copy.

### Final Thesis Copy

Students writing theses must submit an electronic and paper copy of their final work to the Honors Program office by the last day of final exams week. (Note: There are two formats for the final thesis copy – please see below for more detail.) **Due dates are listed on the page titled “Honors Thesis Timeline” at the front of this guide.** Hard copies of students’ final thesis work will be archived for five years and electronic copies will be kept indefinitely.

1) Students whose theses require a significant written component (e.g., research paper, scholarly paper, business plan, etc.) will submit a paper as their final thesis copy to the University Honors Program office.

Specifications for the final copy of the Honors thesis:

- Papers must consistently follow a writing style appropriate for the type of research, design project, or scholarship focus of the thesis. The style and standards are determined by your thesis adviser.
- Papers will vary in length according to topic area. Please consult with your thesis adviser for guidelines regarding paper length.
- The written component must be submitted in electronic and paper formats to the University Honors Program office. **Students who do not submit both versions of their final thesis product will receive an “Incomplete” in HONR 499.**
- **The Honors Thesis Evaluation form must be submitted to the Honors office or students will receive an “Incomplete” in HONR 499.**

2) Students completing Honors theses that fall outside the boundaries of a traditional research paper (e.g., music recital or art portfolio) will submit to the Honors Program office some form of permanent record of their creative activity (e.g., video, portfolio, or audio CD) as well as the seven page, typed formal reflection paper.

Specifications for the formal reflection paper:

- Papers must include (a) an explanation of the topic area and reasons for choosing it, (b) the steps taken to complete the project, (c) a description of the final work, (d) an assessment of the importance of the creative activity and how it contributed to the learning process and/or prepared you for a career, and (e) a brief reflection about the overall thesis experience.
- Papers must be typed and at least seven pages in length.
- The written component must be submitted in electronic and paper format to the University Honors Program office. **Students who do not submit both versions of their final thesis product will receive an “Incomplete” in HONR 499.**
- **The Honors Thesis Evaluation form must be completed by the adviser and committee member(s) and submitted to the Honors office with the final grade or the student will receive an “Incomplete” in HONR 499.**

<b>Honors Thesis Presentation</b>
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The Honors thesis oral presentation is an opportunity to formally present your creative activities to your committee and is worth ten percent of your final HONR 499 grade. You must give a formal oral presentation on your thesis to the committee by the twelfth week of the semester in which you are taking HONR 499. **Due dates are listed on the page titled “Honors Thesis Timeline” at the front of this guide.** If you are unable to present during the twelfth week, you must receive permission from Bob Keller, the Honors Program Director, and your thesis adviser, to present at a later date. Email him at [Robert.Keller@colostate.edu](mailto:Robert.Keller@colostate.edu) and explain your request for a delay. Please CC your adviser when you email Bob.

The Honors thesis presentation differs from a graduate thesis defense in that it is less formal and more of a celebration of your learning experience. The presentation is approximately fifteen to twenty minutes in duration followed by a question and answer session with the committee. The formal oral presentation should draw upon the informative and persuasive speaking skills you have developed in the Honors seminars. Practice giving the presentation as you would with any formal speech. You need to pay particular attention to:

- writing, reviewing, and revising a complete sentence outline of your presentation;
- developing a much shorter “bare bones” outline for the actual extemporaneous presentation;

- introducing the presentation in a way that captures audience attention and interest, and previews the main points;
- developing a main body that presents key points (ideas) and perspectives, analysis, arguments, and results;
- focusing on a delivery that is well-organized and clearly presented;
- ending with a summary and conclusion; and
- using PowerPoint is acceptable as long as the presentation is formal, extemporaneous, and follows the presentation guidelines.

Having said this, please remember to review the relevant sections of *The Speaker's Handbook* and work with your faculty thesis adviser on the desired format.

Students whose thesis is artistry (vocal recitals, dance performances, plays, films, or art portfolios) must also have a presentation followed by a question and answer session. In these cases, students typically present their formal reflection paper. (See the previous section, "Final Thesis Copy," for more information about the formal reflection paper.) Note: Early in the semester, students should work with their major department to coordinate the logistics of the presentation, which include selecting a time with the committee and reserving a room for the presentation. If your department is unable to secure a room for the presentation, please contact the Honors Program office at 491-5679.

The Honors thesis presentation is open to the public, and students are responsible for notifying the Honors Program office via email ([honors@colostate.edu](mailto:honors@colostate.edu)) of the time and location at least one week before the presentation so that it may be listed on the Honors Program website. Faculty, staff, students, family members, and other interested individuals are welcome to attend and it is expected that they will contact the student and/or adviser before the presentation date.

Following the formal oral presentation and question and answer session, the committee will excuse the student and audience, discuss the grade for the paper and presentation, decide on a final grade, and complete the *Honors Thesis Evaluation Form*. (The form is included in the back of this guide and is available on-line at <http://www.honors.colostate.edu/Forms/Forms.htm>). The committee will then give feedback to the student about his/her presentation and give the evaluation form to the student to deliver to the Honors Program Office within two business days after the presentation but no later than the last day of final exams week. Please note that the thesis adviser determines the final grade and completes the oral presentation assessment for HONR 499.

### Helpful Hints

Honors students who have completed the Honors thesis offer the following sage advice:

- √ Pick a topic that is VERY interesting to you.
- √ Start early! Don't procrastinate!
- √ To stay motivated, set mini-goals that you can accomplish.
- √ Take a look at past Honors theses that are on file in the Honors office.
- √ Make bi-monthly appointments with your thesis adviser. This will keep you motivated as well as provide a good source of continuous feedback.
- √ Give yourself PLENTY of time to research/create your thesis. You can write about your topic more easily and more successfully when you're well-informed.
- √ Utilize the library; you'll be surprised by the number of resources it provides. The library staff has experts in different fields, so definitely seek them out.
- √ Revise constantly! Every time you add to your thesis, print it out and read over it again. Have a friend read it, or someone else you trust.

- √ Make sure your citations are accurate because this is an important paper that requires correct documentation.
- √ Outline your thesis presentation ahead of time, paying close attention to your time limit.
- √ The week before you present your thesis, start practicing in front of others.
- √ Communicate with your committee a few weeks before the thesis presentation so they can set aside the date and time.
- √ Check out the room in which you will be presenting to make yourself feel more comfortable on the big day.

*Written by Bethany Hilgers, 2002 University Honors Scholar*

## Forms



- √ Honors Thesis Preliminary Proposal, Page 19
- √ Honors Thesis Formal Proposal, Page 21
- √ Honors Thesis Evaluation and Oral Presentation Assessment Form, Pages 22-23

**\*Please note: Forms are available online as Word documents at <http://www.honors.colostate.edu/Forms/Forms.htm>  
Students are required to type the requested information and responses to questions on the forms.**

**HONORS THESIS  
PRELIMINARY PROPOSAL**

**Please type** the information and responses to questions on this form or use the electronic version which can be found on the Honors Program website. Please develop this preliminary proposal with your faculty thesis adviser, obtain your adviser's signature, and submit it to your HONR 399 instructor by the due date. Your HONR 399 instructor and the Honors Program Director will review the form and place it in your file. Please keep a copy of your proposal for your records.

(A Word version is available at [www.honors.colostate.edu/Forms/Documents/Preliminar\\_Proposal.doc](http://www.honors.colostate.edu/Forms/Documents/Preliminar_Proposal.doc))

Instructor Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Track 1  Track 2

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ CSUID: \_\_\_\_\_

Local Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City State Zip Code

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Major(s) and Minor(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Semester and year you intend to graduate: \_\_\_\_\_

Tentative thesis title: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty thesis adviser\*: \_\_\_\_\_ Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty thesis adviser campus address: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty thesis adviser e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Interest: Explain why you are interested in this topic.**

\*Please refer to pages 11 and 12 for faculty thesis adviser requirements.

**2. Describe your thesis: What are the creative activities, research questions, and/or design features that are foundational to your thesis?**

**3. Describe your methods and approaches: How will you discover answers to research questions, create artistry, and/or develop design projects?**

**4. Outcome: Describe the creative activity and the expected research result, final product, and/or artistic expression that is the core of your thesis.**

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Student signature

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Date

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Faculty thesis adviser signature

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Date

## HONORS THESIS FORMAL PROPOSAL

**Please type** the information and responses to questions on this form or use the electronic version which can be found on the Honors Program website. Please complete this formal proposal with your adviser, obtain your adviser's signature, and submit it to the Honors Program office no later than the second week of the semester in which you are registered for HONR 499. The Honors Program Director's approval is required in order to receive a grade for HONR499 – Honors Thesis. (A Word version is available at [http://www.honors.colostate.edu/Forms/Documents/Formal\\_Proposal.doc](http://www.honors.colostate.edu/Forms/Documents/Formal_Proposal.doc))

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ CSUID: \_\_\_\_\_

Local Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City State Zip Code

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Major(s) and Minor(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Semester and year of graduation: \_\_\_\_\_

Semester & year you want to be enrolled in HONR 499: \_\_\_\_\_ Track 1  Track 2

Thesis title: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty thesis adviser: \_\_\_\_\_ Department: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Committee member: \_\_\_\_\_ Department: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Committee member\*: \_\_\_\_\_ Department: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please attach a typed description of your thesis that addresses the following areas:**

1. Thesis title.
2. An explanation of your interest in the subject.
3. Statement describing the central themes, research questions, design project, and/or creative activity.
4. A description of the major tasks that must be completed.
5. A list of resources (e.g., books, materials, people, journals) that are needed for your thesis. Please use proper citations for text documents.
6. A timeline to completion (**NOTE** – This timeline must include the date you will submit a penultimate draft to your adviser and committee members and the date you will present your thesis to your committee. Refer to the current thesis guide for specific due dates.)
7. A description of the final product.

**Faculty thesis adviser approval:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty thesis adviser signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\*The faculty thesis adviser and only one additional committee member are required. Additional committee members are optional.



**SECTION III: STUDENT ORAL PRESENTATION ASSESSMENT BY THESIS ADVISER**

Using the following evaluation standards, the thesis adviser assesses the student’s speech communication skills according to the criteria listed below.

<b>Key:</b> + Excellent √ Satisfactory - Needs Improvement 0 Failed to Complete
---

Introduction

\_\_\_\_\_ Captured audience attention/interest  
\_\_\_\_\_ Previewed main points

Body:

_____ Main points clear	_____ Sources cited
_____ Main points supported	_____ Clarity of visual aids
_____ Organization logical	_____ Management of visual aids

Conclusion:

\_\_\_\_\_ Summarized main points  
\_\_\_\_\_ Addressed audience questions

Delivery:

_____ Extemporaneous	_____ Articulation
_____ Volume	_____ Eye Contact
_____ Rate	_____ Enthusiasm

Overall Impression:

Comments:

<p><b>Please complete sections I, II, and III of this form and have the student submit it to the Honors office within 2 business days after his/her presentation but no later than the last day of final exams week.</b> <b>Campus mailing address: Honors Program, 1025 Campus Delivery</b> <b>Fax: (970) 491-2617</b></p>
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## Appendix I: Honors Thesis Check Sheet

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Select your thesis topic and your thesis adviser.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Complete the *Honors Thesis Preliminary Proposal* and submit it to your HONR 399 instructor.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Work on the *Honors Thesis Formal Proposal*.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Select at least one committee member with your thesis adviser's help. (Your committee is composed of your thesis adviser and at least one committee member.)
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Enroll in HONR 499 during the registration period for the semester you plan to take HONR 499 (October for spring semester and April for fall semester) via RAMweb.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Try to complete the *Honors Thesis Formal Proposal* and submit it to the Honors Program office the semester before you enroll for HONR 499. The proposal must be submitted to the Honors Program office no later than the second week of the semester in which you are taking HONR 499.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Coordinate your formal oral presentation date and time with your committee.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Secure a room (usually in your adviser's department) for your presentation.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ Email your formal oral presentation date, time, and location at least one week in advance to the Honors Program office (Honors@colostate.edu).
10. \_\_\_\_\_ Submit the penultimate thesis draft or formal reflection paper to your committee at least two weeks before your thesis presentation (**by the 10<sup>th</sup> week of the semester in which you are taking HONR 499**).
11. \_\_\_\_\_ Give a formal oral presentation on your thesis to your committee by the 12<sup>th</sup> week of the semester in which you are taking HONR 499. **Provide evaluation forms for advisers and committee member(s) [also found in the Honors Thesis Guide online].**
12. \_\_\_\_\_ Submit paper and electronic copies of your final thesis product to the Honors Program office by the last day of final exams week. **Students who do not submit both copies of their final thesis product and the evaluation form will receive an "Incomplete" in HONR 499.**

## **Appendix II: Honors Thesis Guidelines for Formal Reflection Papers**

A formal reflection paper is required for: (1) engineering students who intend to use their senior design projects to partially fulfill the Honors thesis requirement; (2) visual and performing artists whose primary thesis component is an art portfolio, voice recital, music recital, dance performance, film, and so forth; and (3) any creative project such as a computer program that does not have a written component.

In these cases, students will write at least a seven page (double spaced) formal reflection paper that includes: (1) an explanation of the creative activity; (2) the steps taken to complete the project; (3) a description of the significance and/or interpretation of the creative activity; (4) an assessment of how the creative activity contributed to the student's knowledge; and (5) a brief reflection about the overall thesis experience. The thesis adviser may ask the student to address other areas. Engineers must also submit the group paper from their senior design project, and creative artists must submit voice recordings, video recordings, photographs, or film of their creative projects.

Engineers and others who are involved in group projects are required to write a three to five page paper (double spaced) which explains their individual contributions to the group project and the benefits and challenges of working in groups as an appendix to the formal reflection paper.

Students will follow a writing style recommended by their thesis adviser that is appropriate for the type of creative activity.

Students must submit the penultimate draft of their Honors thesis to their committee two weeks before the thesis presentation. The final copy of the thesis must be submitted to the Honors Program office in both electronic and paper format no later than the last day of finals week.

Students must give a fifteen to twenty minute formal, extemporaneous presentation on their creative activity and their formal reflection paper. After the formal presentation the thesis adviser and committee member(s) ask questions and they may invite members in the audience to ask questions as well.



## The Stress Diet

### Breakfast

- ½ grapefruit
- 1 piece whole wheat toast
- 8 oz. skim milk

### Lunch

- 4 oz. lean broiled chicken breast
- 1 cup steamed zucchini
- 1 Oreo cookie
- Herb tea

### Mid-afternoon snack

- Rest of the package of Oreos
- 1 quart Rocky Road ice cream
- 1 jar hot fudge

### Dinner

- 2 loaves garlic bread
- Extra-large mushroom/pepperoni pizza
- 3 Milky Ways
- Entire frozen cheesecake, eaten directly from freezer



Don't forget that stressed spelled backwards = desserts!

