

## Senior Honors Thesis Program Timeline

### I. Prior to Starting a Senior Honors Thesis:

1. **Start thinking about possible thesis topics and potential thesis advisors.** Speak with your professors regarding their research interests and current research projects to see if there is an area or aspect of their current research you wish to expand upon.
2. **Speak to students currently enrolled in the Senior Honors Thesis program.** Even if they are not working in your discipline, they will be the best source for understanding the process from your side.
3. **Look at other Honors Theses.** The Honors College has copies of previous theses from all departments on campus. You should look at as many in your field as you can in order to understand the level of work that is expected, and to see how previous students have conducted their theses. Copies of previous senior honors theses are available in the Estess Library (room 212D) and the Office of Undergraduate Research (room 212W). Examples of graduate theses are also available online (<https://uh-ir.tdl.org/uh-ir/handle/10657/1>).
4. **Approach faculty members for advice.** The first faculty member you speak with may not be able to direct your thesis, but should be able to give you feedback about your topic and help you find someone who can be your thesis advisor.
5. **Ask a faculty member to serve as your thesis advisor.** Once you have an idea of what you wish to pursue, ask a faculty member to direct your thesis. If the faculty member has not directed a thesis before, the Office of Undergraduate Research and the Honors College can provide faculty member with guidelines and answer questions. Please have the faculty member contact the Office of Undergraduate Research ([undergrad-research@uh.edu](mailto:undergrad-research@uh.edu)) for an overview of the senior honors program.
6. **Complete the Verification of Eligibility and a General Petition Form** (<http://www.uh.edu/academics/forms/>). The Director of Undergraduate Studies in your department (not your thesis advisor) will certify your eligibility to begin a thesis project. Return this form to the Office of Undergraduate Research. When completing the General Petition, select “#17. Other” and ask your thesis advisor to sign the form as your Advisor/Instructor. In the Explanation section write: “This petition is for enrollment in Senior Honors Thesis hours [ENGL3399, BIOL3399, etc] for [semester and year].” This form goes to an academic advisor in the department of your major. *Note:* Some departments require thesis students to complete the prospectus and Prospectus Approval Form before enrolling in the thesis course. Please confer with your academic advisor for more information.  
**\*\*\*ATTENTION ENGLISH MAJORS:** *The first step for all English majors is to complete the **Department of English Thesis Advisor Form** and submit it to the English Advisor, 205 Roy G. Cullen Building.*
7. **Enroll in 3399 (or equivalent) Senior Honors Thesis course.** Your section of 3399 will be created by an academic advisor in the department of your major. Most academic advisors will manually place you in your section of 3399 or 4399. Confirm your enrollment by checking your PeopleSoft account.
8. **Write a prospectus.** A typical prospectus is three to five pages in length and includes a brief bibliography. The prospectus is meant to help you narrow the focus of your project before you begin the work. Students who take on a project that is too large in scope often

have trouble finishing. The prospectus should serve as a contract or plan-of-action for your thesis. Moreover, the prospectus does not reflect finished work; some aspects of your thesis may change as you complete the project.

9. **Find a second reader within the field.** Your thesis advisor should help you identify a second reader. The second reader will need to approve your prospectus.
10. **Submit the prospectus and the Prospectus Approval Form** to your thesis advisor and second reader for their signatures. Submit the signed form to the Office of Undergraduate Research (room 212W, the Honors College). Submission of the Prospectus Approval Form is due by the first day of the semester in which you begin the thesis program. Once the first and second readers are satisfied with the prospectus, the Office of Undergraduate Research will review the prospectus and assign a third reader, also called an Honors Reader, to serve on the committee. You are notified via email when the Honors College chooses an Honors Reader to serve on your committee.
11. **Submit the Senior Honors Thesis Checklist:** Before beginning the first semester of the thesis program, review the Senior Honors Thesis Checklist with your thesis director. A signed copy of the checklist should be submitted with your prospectus and Prospectus Approval Form.

## **II. First Semester of the Senior Honors Thesis Program:**

1. Attend the **Senior Honors Thesis Orientation** at the start of the semester.
2. **Create a plan for the various stages of the project, including deadlines.** Your faculty advisor should be able to help you devise a timetable and determine reasonable expectations for your work within the given time periods. It is essential that you adhere to the timeline that you create for completion. This will keep you on track and ensure you complete the project in time to meet the binding deadlines set by your college.
3. **Begin (or continue) writing/research.** Remember that the Honors Thesis is a major time commitment and you must begin early if you expect to finish on time.
4. **Seek help when needed.** Remember not to let yourself be overwhelmed.
5. Toward the end of the first semester, **register for 4399H (or equivalent) “Senior Honors Thesis” course in your major.** For most majors, this means you will need to complete and submit a second General Petition Form.
6. Your thesis director will assign you an “IP” or in progress grade for the first semester thesis course.

## **III. Second Semester of the Senior Honors Thesis Program:**

1. **Continue writing.** Keeping the project manageable often involves dividing it up into smaller parts. Be sure you are meeting with your thesis director regularly to stay on task.
2. **Give your advisor a rough draft of your thesis by mid-February (spring semester 4399 students) or late-September (fall semester 4399 students).** At this point in the process, your advisor can help you shape your thesis into the draft you will present to your readers for the oral defense.
3. **Schedule an oral defense.** Find a time that is convenient for all of your readers. The oral defense is an opportunity to get feedback from your committee members before submitting the thesis to the dean’s office. Your committee may demand revisions, which

is why you should schedule your defense at least two weeks before your college's binding deadline. Spring semester 4399 students should defend their thesis by mid-April. Fall semester 4399 students should defend their thesis before the Thanksgiving holiday. If you wish to have your defense in the Honors College, rooms can be reserved in advance through the Office of Undergraduate Research ([undergrad-research@uh.edu](mailto:undergrad-research@uh.edu))

#### **V. One to Two Weeks Before the Oral Defense:**

1. All readers should receive a copy of the version you wish to defend. Bring a copy of the **Defense and Final Evaluation Form** with you to your defense. This form should be submitted to the Office of Undergraduate Research after your defense.

#### **VI. At the Oral Defense:**

1. Most commonly, you will give a presentation or narrative about your project and then respond to questions from each of the three readers. Ask your committee members if guests may attend the defense.
2. When you successfully pass the defense, the thesis advisor will submit grades for both 3399 and 4399.

#### **VII. Immediately After Final Revisions:**

1. Prepare the final copy for binding according to your college's binding requirements and deadlines. When the Dean's Office approves the final version of your thesis, a member of the Honors College will notify the Registrar's office. The appropriate honors designation will then be added to your official transcript.