



MSU Denver Honors Program

Thesis Advisor Guidelines for HON 4950 –Honors Thesis

First of all, thank you for agreeing to work with one of our Honors students on their thesis! This is an integral part of the Honors curriculum and allows the students to apply their training and expertise to a real life problem. What follows are some guidelines that the Honors Program has put together to help Faculty Thesis Advisors understand their responsibilities and work most effectively with the Honors student as they complete this project. The Honors student with whom you will be working has the complete guidelines for HON 4950, and you will find these materials at the end of this document.

Most importantly, *the student is responsible for the timely and successful completion of his/her thesis!* We encourage you to consult regularly with your student to keep them on track, but we do not expect you to track down truant Honors students. It is the student's responsibility to work with you.

Thesis Advisors should do the following:

- Work with the student to refine and focus the student's interests into a suitable thesis project.
- Provide a clear expectation for the thesis/project, addressing benchmarks, length, assessment, and other aspects germane to scholarship in the particular discipline.
- Provide guidance on finding a Second Reader familiar with the relevant discipline.
- Be prepared to meet with the student regularly (we encourage bi-weekly meetings).
- Inform the Honors Director if there appear to be indications that the project is not on track for completion.
- Read and comment on drafts of the project as it develops.
- Read and critique the Thesis *before* the Thesis Defense, prepare questions for the formal Defense.
- Attend the Honors Thesis Defense at the end of the semester.
- Provide a grade for the course, based on the paper and the Defense. A rubric is provided for your convenience in this packet, but can be modified at your discretion. You may choose how much to weight the thesis and the defense. The Honors Director is the faculty of record and will enter the final grade you give for HON 4950 (or capstone course equivalent of HON 4950).

Thanks again for working with our Honors students. We hope you enjoy the experience. Feel free to contact the Honors Director with any questions. Supplementary materials (including sample rubric and student materials) follow.

The following guidelines are provided to the student at the beginning of the semester. The Thesis Advisor should facilitate the student's timely completion of the thesis and presentation based on these guidelines.



Thesis and Presentation/Defense Guidelines

Thesis Guidelines

- Copies of the final paper must be turned in Thesis Advisor, Second Reader, and Honors Director at least two weeks prior to the thesis presentation and defense.
- Although variations in the paper's format are to be expected (given the variety of disciplines from which the project might draw) certain aspects **MUST** be included:
 - Statement of Problem/Purpose of Research
 - What is your ultimate goal in completing this Project? (What are you trying to accomplish?)
 - List objectives you hope to accomplish in completing your research. Discuss each in detail.
 - Why is this research important for an audience to learn?
 - How does your research project meet the objectives of an Honors Program? (How do your research efforts exceed research accomplished by the traditional college student not enrolled in an Honors Program?)
 - Literature Review and Background of this Project
 - What research has been done previously, who are the leaders in this research, and how have they carried it out?
 - Be sure to site at least one instance of *disagreement* amongst scholars in this area. Explain *both* viewpoints and then explain why your research or analysis supports one over the other. By citing scholars who disagree with you, you make your own argument seem far stronger because you acknowledge and explain the strongest counterarguments.
 - Be sure to explain how this is *interdisciplinary*.
 - Bibliography
 - List a complete bibliography of all sources referenced in your thesis.
 - You should choose the citation method appropriate to your field (APA, MLA, etc.) and you must be consistent in your usage of it
 - Summation, Conclusions, and Evaluation Procedures
 - Now that your research is nearing completion, summarize what you have learned.
 - Discuss your conclusions. You may include tables and other statistical data but you must include a narrative including the accomplishment of your original objectives.

NOTE: Failure to submit a completed Thesis at least two weeks prior to your scheduled presentation and defense will result in the cancellation of your scheduled defense.

Thesis Presentation and Defense Guidelines

- The presentation may take different forms. However (in most formats), the presentation should include at least 20-30 minutes of prepared remarks followed by a 20-30 minute question and answer defense from the audience. The prepared remarks can be a recitation of the thesis, but you are not limited to this.
- A time during the last two weeks of the semester is scheduled (by the Honors Program) for students to present presentations. Students frequently use PowerPoint, Prezi, physical artifacts,, or other visual aids.
- The above-mentioned formats are NOT the only formats available. The Honors Program encourages active learning and creative approaches to problems, and (in keeping with this philosophy) different and creative approaches to a presentation format are encouraged.
 - o Which venue best matches your project's objectives?
 - Music students may do their presentations as lecture-recitals in which they combine their 20-30 minutes of lecture with a recital on their primary instrument.
 - If you are a Chemistry major and want to demonstrate a new technique you have developed, perhaps a presentation in a lab environment would be better suited.
 - If you're an educator and your project deals with getting students interested in the library, perhaps you could present at the Auraria Library or a public school library.
 - o The only restrictions are that it must be accessible to the faculty and students of MSU Denver. This could include any venue within Downtown Denver!
- Presentations should be *engaging*! Your project should be of great interest to you. Be sure your presentation conveys that excitement to the audience!
 - o Reading PowerPoint slides to an audience is NOT engaging. Do not do it.
 - o Use what you learned in your ENG classes to create an engaging, interactive and (most importantly) *interesting* presentation!
 - o Encouraging audience participation (when applicable) is always a good idea.
 - o Handouts, physical objects, demonstrations and charts are engaging. Mix your presentational media!

**MSU Denver Honors Program
Thesis Rubric**

Criteria/Standard	Excellent -Exceeds standard (3 points)	Adequate - Meets Standard (2 points)	Poor - Does not Meet Standard (1 point)	Score
Conforms to disciplinary norms and Honors Standards	Student will comply with disciplinary norms with respect to length, topic, form and purpose. Sources are cited appropriately.	Student fulfills assignments with minor discernable problems in this area.	A sufficient number of discernable problems in this area interfere with understanding and quality.	
Development of Ideas	Student presents ideas with relevant support (e.g., facts, statistics, and examples. Reasoning is sound.	Student fulfills assignments with minor discernable problems in this area.	A sufficient number of discernable problems in this area interfere with understanding and quality.	
Organization	Student promotes coherence by logically ordering paragraphs and using devices, such as thesis statements, topic sentences, introductions/conclusions and transitional phrases.	Student fulfills assignments with minor discernable problems in this area.	A sufficient number of discernable problems in this area interfere with understanding and quality.	
Language	Student uses language appropriately for the topic, field, genre, and rhetorical situation.	Student fulfills assignments with minor discernable problems in this area.	A sufficient number of discernable problems in this area interfere with understanding and quality.	
Grammar and mechanics	Student uses grammar, punctuation, syntax, and spelling appropriately.	Student fulfills assignments with minor discernable problems in this area.	A sufficient number of discernable problems in this area interfere with understanding and quality.	
Analyzing information - interdisciplinary	Student interprets information accurately and appropriately in new contexts.	Presents information accurately and appropriately with minor inconsistencies, irrelevancies, or omissions.	Student often uses information inaccurately, incompletely, with citation errors, or with major omissions.	
Presenting multiple solutions/position	Student accurately presents and explains multiple solutions, positions, or perspectives.	Student accurately presents two views but lacks depth of research into contrary perspectives.	Student omits contrary views altogether.	
Drawing well-supported conclusions	Student creates a detailed, complex solution that is well-supported, logically consistent and complete.	Student organizes a solution that is logical and consistent with evidence.	Student presents a conclusion that is illogical or inconsistent with the evidence presented.	
Synthesizing ideas into a coherent whole	Student integrates ideas or develops solutions that are exceptionally clear, cohesive and coherent.	Student connects ideas or develops solutions in a clear and coherent order.	The student presents fragmented ideas and solutions without a clear, coherent order.	
Engagement and application	Student identifies effective, highly relevant venue in which to present findings, and presents relevant solutions or perspectives to the community.	Student identifies a modestly relevant venue or group, presenting findings in a way that allows useful conclusion.	Student fails to identify relevant application of their research. Research is not connected with any real-world situation, population or context.	
			Total Score	

Grading Scale

Note: A grade of “C” or better is a “passing” grade for any Honors course including the combined grade for the Thesis and defense.

A+ = 97% - 100% 29 - 30 points	C+ = 77% - 79% 23 points
A = 90% - 96% 27 - 28 points	C = 70% - 76% 21 – 22 points
B+ = 87% - 89% 26 points	D = 60% - 69% 18 - 20 points
B = 80% - 86% 24 - 25 points	F = <60% <18 points

Honors Thesis Proposal Guidelines and Example *(provided to students in Honors Thesis Guidebook)*

After you have chosen your thesis topic and made the initial research steps into your line of inquiry, you should submit your thesis proposal for approval to your advisor, second reader, and the Honors Director. Your proposal is to be presented on the Honors Thesis Approval and Record Form (see p. 15) which is attached to the following. The following should be approximately two-four typed pages and should include the following information.

1. Your name and other information included on the Thesis.
2. The proposed title of your thesis.
3. An approximately 350-500 word abstract describing your thesis topic. The abstract should include an overview of the project, your central argument, and expected outcomes.
4. A bibliography of your most essential sources.
5. Dates/titles of the minimum two (2) required formal presentations you attended (or will attend) before your thesis defense

The following is an example of a thesis abstract and initial bibliography.

[Thesis Title]

This thesis examines the role of women in Anglo-Saxon poetry and history. Historians and literary critics alike have often focused on the masculinity of the Anglo-Saxon corpus and dismissed its female characters as insignificant or misogynist portrayals. This misinterpretation of women in Germanic poetry often stems from a lack of knowledge of Anglo-Saxon culture, or possibly an unwillingness to reconcile it comfortably with the literary corpus. This thesis seeks to present the poetry alongside the historical accounts and archeological evidence in order to paint a more even-handed portrayal of Anglo-Saxon women. The findings are surprising and illuminating.

Old English poetry consistently shows women living in a rough equality with men, a conclusion borne out by the hard historical evidence. In addition, linguistic evidence consistently argues that Old English poetry borrows heavily from older Germanic myth in the characterization of its women. Poems ranging from “The Wife’s Lament” to “Maxims I” show women as sharing the fate of men, (good or bad) and should not be read as helpless or tragic simply because women are the main characters.

Old English poetry often celebrates men’s valor but it does not neglect the strength and importance of women. Germanic heroines are able rulers, diplomats and warriors. Queens such as *Beowulf*’s Wealhtheow and Hygd are far from background decoration, but characters who carry the weight of heavy symbolism and power, subtly influencing the life of the titular hero. Old English heroines are not confined to the rich atmosphere of the mead hall, but can also lead armies and wield swords, as evidenced by Judith and Elene. Even Juliana (a martyred saint) is shown to be in direct control of her own destiny.

When we read the poetry from this perspective (one that avoids the extremes of gender criticism), a new picture emerges that challenges our perceptions of the medieval era. While we know that things cannot have been perfect, the overwhelming impression from the historical and literary evidence is that Anglo-Saxon women were given a fair place in a dangerous and uncertain world. They were seen as competent and able individuals and were accorded respect and dignity as a matter of course. They are women of intelligence, valued for their wise words. When their entreaties to reason fail, they can easily leap into action. The impression they give off whether they are a lonely exile, a determined saint, or a glittering queen, is one of calm courage and acceptance.

Works Cited

- Bandel, Betty. “The English Chroniclers’ Attitude Towards Women.” Journal of the History of Ideas. 16.1 (1955): 113-118. JSTOR. JSTOR. Auraria Lib., Denver. 10 April 2006. <<http://0-www.jstor.org>>
- Damico, Helen. Beowulf’s Wealhtheow and the Valkyrie Tradition. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984
- Damico, Helen, and Alexandra Hennessey Olsen, eds. New Readings on Women in Old English Literature. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990.
- Enright, Michael. Lady With a Mead Cup. Portland: Four Courts Press, 1996.
- Fell, Christine, Cecily Clark, and Elizabeth Williams. Women in Anglo-Saxon England and the Impact of 1066. London: British Museum Publications, 1984.
- Stenton, Doris Mary. The English Woman in History. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1957.



Honors Thesis Application and Record

Must be submitted to the Honors Director before or during the **third week** of HON 4950.

Note: Required attachments are completed in MGT 4948.

Student Name: _____ **ID#** _____

Proposed Honors Thesis Title: _____

Attach (verify your attachments with “X”):

___ Honors thesis abstract (350-500 words) describing your thesis topic, overview of thesis project, your central argument, and expected outcomes

___ Preliminary outline of thesis and

___ Bibliography of your most essential sources (using your discipline’s preferred citation style)

List dates/titles of formal presentations you attended (or will attend) before your defense:

1. _____

2. _____

Proposal Approval

Thesis Advisor: _____
Printed Signature Date

Second Reader: _____
Printed Signature Date

Honors Director: _____
Printed Signature Date

Thesis and Defense of Thesis Approval _____ **HON 4950 grade:** _____

Thesis Advisor: _____
Printed Signature Date

Second Reader: _____
Printed Signature Date

Honors Director: _____
Printed Signature Date