Honors Thesis Guidebook



**Honors Thesis Seminar (HON 4948)**

**Honors Senior Thesis (HON 4950)**

**Paired Honors Senior Thesis (HON 4951)**

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# 

# Overview

Congratulations on getting to this point in the Honors Program! You have reached the culmination of your undergraduate career and the Honors curriculum. Many of our Honors Program graduates say that the Honors Thesis is one of the highlights of their undergraduate academic experience because it allows them to explore their most passionate interests, engage in the process of discovery, and work one-on-one with outstanding faculty. Our hope is that by completing the Honors Thesis, you will appreciate and understand the challenges, complexities, and rewards of scholarly and creative academic projects.

The Honors Thesis represents an individual research project that is largely self-guided. Students have much responsibility in this process. They must show initiative and discipline in order to successfully complete the Thesis. Students attend class sessions with the Honors Program Director and frequently communicate with their Thesis Advisor(s). It is the student’s responsibility to schedule meetings with his or her advisor(s) and turn in chapters for revision according to the timetable decided upon in advising sessions. While this is an independent project, there is a wide network of support available to each student throughout the process. Students should communicate concerns, setbacks and triumphs to the Director and advisor(s). Good communication will help to make the process more manageable and the final outcome a success!

The Honors thesis has benefits beyond college as well. Former students used submitted their thesis as writing samples for their graduate school applications and drawn upon their thesis experience in job interviews after graduation. The thesis shows that you are creative and hard working - characteristics highly valued in today’s graduate programs and the job market.

The information in this *Honors Thesis Guidebook* will help you navigate your way through the process. Keep the Guidebook handy between now and your thesis completion. If you have a question about the process you can find most information in the Guidebook. However, it is not an exhaustive resource, so be sure to consult with your Thesis Advisor and the honors staff for additional information and guidance. The *Guidebook* should also be a helpful resource for your Thesis Advisor(s) as the Guidebook contains information about expectations for students, primary Thesis Advisors, and additional readers. We encourage you to share the Guidebook with your Thesis Advisor(s) right away.

Remember: The honors staff and your Thesis Advisor(s) are here to help make the Honors Thesis a meaningful experience and excellent capstone to your education at MSU Denver!

# Enrollment Options for the Honors Thesis

The Honors Thesis is a two-course sequence that begins with Honors Thesis Seminar (HON 4948). Honors students must take Honors Thesis Seminar before moving on to the subsequent course. There are two options for the second course - Senior Honors Thesis (HON 4950) and Paired Senior Honors Thesis (HON 4951).

**Honors Thesis Seminar (HON 4948) 1 Credit Hour**

This course is taken prior to the Senior Honors Thesis (HON 4950) and is only open to honors students. This course familiarizes students with project organization and the scope and proper format of an undergraduate thesis project. Each student develops: a thesis statement, a project outline, an initial bibliography and a working abstract. Students also identify a primary Thesis Advisor for their projects. The Thesis Advisor is a faculty member with expertise in a discipline closely related to the topic of the thesis project.

**Senior Honors Thesis (HON 4950) 3 Credit Hours**

The Honors Thesis is the culmination of the Honors undergraduate experience. In this course, students complete an independent research and/or creative project under the direction of a primary Thesis Advisor and the Honors Director. The Thesis Advisor is a faculty member with expertise in a discipline closely related to the topic of the thesis project. Students submit a written thesis and deliver a public oral presentation of their work.

**Paired Senior Honors Thesis (HON 4951) 1 Credit Hour**

The Paired Honors Thesis is the culmination of the Honors undergraduate experience. This one-credit course must be paired with an upper division departmental Senior Experience, research or capstone course. In this course, students complete an independent research and/or creative project under the direction of a primary Thesis Advisor and the Honors Director. The Thesis Advisor is a faculty member with expertise in a discipline closely related to the topic of the thesis project. Students submit a written thesis and deliver a public oral presentation of their work.

# Timeline for HON 4948 and HON 4950

This timeline provides an overview of the Thesis completion process. It takes about 10 months from start to finish, not including the gap months. Ideally, each student going through the thesis process will have 3 to 8 months between taking HON 4948 and HON 4950; this interval is referred to below as the “gap semester.”

First Semester - HON 4948: Honors Thesis Seminar

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Month** | **Research Progress** |
| Month 1 (Aug./Jan.) | Decide on Topic, Develop Research Questions, Begin Annotated Literature Review, Begin looking for an Advisor, |
| Month 2 (Sep./Feb.) | Refine Research Questions, Continue working on the Annotated Literature Review, Identify an Advisor, Begin Outline |
| Month 3 (Oct./Mar.) | Continue to work on: Annotated Literature Review, Research Questions, Outline, and Draft an Abstract |
| Month 4 (Nov./Apr.) | Continue to work on: Annotated Literature Review, Research Questions, Outline, Abstract, and Draft a Project Timeline |
| Month 5 (Dec./May) | Finalize the Research Proposal including: Research Questions, Annotated Literature Review, Outline, Abstract, and Timeline |

Gap Semester (3-8 Months)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Month** | **Research Progress** |
| Months 3-8 | IRB Completion, Data Collection, Literature Review, Continue to Coordinate with Advisor |

Second Semester - HON 4950: Senior Honors Thesis

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Month** | **Research Progress** |
| Month 6 (Jan./Aug.) | Complete Rubric Selection, Finalize Project Timeline |
| Month 7 (Feb./Sep.) | Submit Draft of 1st Written Portion of Thesis |
| Month 8 (Mar./Oct.) | Submit Draft of 2nd and 3rd Portion of Thesis |
| Month 9 (Apr./Nov) | Submit Full Draft, Schedule Practice Oral Presentation |
| Month 10 (May/Dec.) | Present Thesis at Honors Thesis Symposium, Submit the Final Written Draft to Advisors, Honors Director, and Digital Archive |

# Deadlines for HON 4950 Senior Honors Thesis

Deadlines are extremely important for keeping on track during the final semester of the Thesis process. This table is customizable! Digital copies of this table are available from your instructor. Please write the due dates in the column marked “Deadlines” and refer back to this page at any time.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Senior Honors Thesis (HON 4950) Assignments** | **Deadlines** |
| * Initial Submission of Record of Completion * Submission of Selected Rubrics * Completion of the Project Timeline |  |
| * Submission of Project Goal #1 |  |
| * Submission of Project Goal #2 |  |
| * Submission of Project Goal #3 |  |
| * Submission of 1st Full Draft to Honors Director and Thesis Advisor(s) |  |
| * Practice Oral Presentation |  |
| * Final Oral Presentation: Honors Thesis Symposium |  |
| * Final Written Thesis: Submitted to Thesis Advisor(s), Honors Director and Auraria Library Digital Archive |  |
| * Final Submission of Record of Completion |  |

# Advice on Selecting a Topic

**Having trouble deciding on a topic?**

Think back through your years of education: What subject matter is the most interesting to you? Is there a topic that you could talk about for hours? Do you have a passion or question in your field of study that you’ve always wanted to explore? Do you have a professor that you really admire and you’d like to work with?

Many students struggle to decide on a thesis topic. Reading articles in academic journals from your field may help to inspire you. We also suggest talking to your professors, brainstorming with other honors students, and making an appointment to speak with the Honors Director or a potential advisor.

**Here are some examples of previous thesis titles:**

*Stem:*

* Synthesis of Azulene Bent-Core Dye Manifesting Helical Nanofilament Phase
* Microbial Respiration on Woody Debris across a Natural Phosphorus Gradient & an Experimental pH Gradient in Neotropical Freshwater Streams in Costa Rica
* I Promise to Play Every Day
* An Examination of PI3K-mTOR and RAS-RAF-MEK-ERK Pathways and the Entropy-Generation Modeling of Cancer
* Determination of Entropy Change during the Process of Clathrin-Mediated Endocrytosis in Drosophila Melanogaster of Computational Modeling
* SVV Pathogenesis in Varicella and Zoster
* The Methodological Development of Lipid Residue Analysis in Archaeological Pottery Samples
* Small Players in a Global Process: A Systematic Approach to Soil Microbial Functionality
* The Solution the Pollution is NOT Dilution
* Nutritional Implications of Vertical HIV-1 Transmissions via Breastfeeding in Developing Countries
* Does the Ketogenic Diet Increase the Efficacy of Statins’ Ability to Lower Blood Lipoprotein Concentrations?
* Universal Health Care: Prevention-Aimed Single Payer Would Improve Health and Reduce Costs in the US
* Capture, Conversion, and Utilization of Abundant CO2 and Various Martian Natural Resources for Energy Production for in situ Research and Short-Term Habitation
* Humanity’s Place in a Machine’s World
* The Case for Abstractive Machine Summarization
* Urbanization Impacts on Nutrients Levels: Phosphorus, Nitrogen, and Ammonia in the South Platte River in the Denver Metro Area
* Science, Politics, and Religion: The Ethical Dilemma of Embryonic Stem Cell Research

*Arts & Humanities:*

* Appealing to Student Interest through Popular Culture in Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales
* My Love was Lost: Exploring the Connections Between Photography and Bereavement
* Good Design Practice and the Need for its Application to Interface Technology
* The Novel: A Screenplay
* ‘Desolation of Solitude’: Intellectual Detachment and Interpersonal Embrace in Melville’s *Moby Dick*
* A People’s History of Alcohol Prohibition in Colorado: Labor, Class, Gender, and Moral Reform 1917-1933
* H.I.P. H.O.P. Healing Inter Personally, Healing Our Planet
* Horrific and Sacred: The Role of Museums in Reinterpreting the Historical Narrative of the Civil War

*Social Sciences*

* Eating Animals: Can Consumer Demand Combat Corporate Marketing?
* Redirecting our Counterterrorism Efforts
* Representative Democracy in Crisis: How Big Money Undermines American Electoral Legitimacy
* An Anthropological Approach to Community Based Partnerships in Combating Human Trafficking: Case Study of Alamosa and Grand Junction, Colorado
* Mass Tourism and Contested Space in Barcelona
* Outsiderness: The Resurgence of Japanese Nationalism
* An Analysis of Cultural Cognition: How Our Values Influence Opinions on Science
* Using Policy in the Fight to End Human Trafficking
* LGBTQA People of Color: The Impact of Adversities on Self-Efficacy
* Data-Driven Authoritarianism: A Case Study of the Chinese Social Credit System
* Accessibility of Art Therapy in the Daily Lives of Children and Teens for Support and Active Expression
* Archeological Assessment of Rueter-Hess and Cherokee Mountain
* The Stories Behind the Data: Using Anthropology to Create Culturally Proficient Immigrant Services
* Disconnecting Democracy in the Barrio: On Addressing North East Denver’s Concerns over the I-70 Expansion
* Should Latinos Boycott Hollywood?
* Intersex Identity: The X Option
* Evaluation of Muscle Dysmorphia and its Correlation to Masculinity and Supplement and Performance Enhancing Drug Use

*Communication*

* Dividing the People: How Music Genre Identity can Contribute to Cultural Divisions
* The Accused: The Pre-Production Process of a TV Mini-Series
* Motivating Millennials to Mitigate Climate Change

*Education*

* Bilingual Education Programs in the U.S.
* Literacy Practices Comparison: Bridging the Gap Between Literacy Practices Used in the Elementary Classroom and the Practices that Teachers Value
* A Model for Assessment of Musical Creativity Through Improvisation
* In Defense of the Arts: Benefits of the Creative Curriculum
* Technology as a Catalyst for Educational Reform
* Creative Expression and Literacy: Practice and Accessibility for our Youth

*Business*

* Consolidated Reporting: Development, Issues, and Solution
* (How) Does Identity Taxation Impact Community Practice? The Narratives of LGBTQ and Undocumented Paid Community Organizers
* The Impact of Undocumented Immigrants on US Taxes

*Criminal Justice*

* Restorative Justice in Criminal Offenders: Benefits Concerning the Victim, the Offender, and the Community
* Criminal Justice and Minority Demographics: Utilizing Minority Representation
* Stabilizing Insanity: A Systematic Revision to the Insanity Defense
* Plea Bargaining Injustice: Why We Need a Radical Criminal Justice Revolution

# Advice on Finding a Thesis Advisor and a Second Advisor

Each student will choose a primary Thesis Advisor and has the option to invite a Second Reader. Generally speaking, the Thesis Advisor and Second Reader should be faculty members (part-time or full-time) at MSU Denver and regularly available during the semester when they will serve as your Advisor or Second Reader. Special permission for external advisors can be given, but you will need to discuss this with the Honors Director. You will work very closely with your Advisor throughout the thesis experience, relying on them to guide the direction of your original 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 project.

While some students start the thesis process already knowing their advisors, most don’t. The process of finding an Advisor and Second Reader is perhaps not as daunting as it seems:

* Did you have a professor that really inspired you? Was there a lecturer who talked about a subject that really sparked your interest?
* Sometimes, it is a good idea to think outside the box. Are there professors in other departments you could speak to? Look up different professors and read about their areas of expertise.
* Speak with other Honors Students and brainstorm about potential advisor(s).

We highly suggest that you reach out to multiple potential advisor(s) and speak with them about your project. It is helpful to meet one-on-one because you will get a better feel for their personalities and interests. Explain the concept of the Honors Thesis and articulate the expectations for their participation. After meeting with a potential Advisor ask yourself these questions:

* Do you get along well with this person?
* Are they a supportive mentor?
* Are you excited by the prospect of learning under their guidance?
* Do they have expertise in the field(s) related to this project?
* Are they an effective communicator?
* Will they offer guidance on project and time management?

**Thesis Advisor Role**

The Thesis Advisor is the primary resource for guidance regarding the content and organization of the thesis project. This individual is an expert in a field of study closely related to the thesis topic. The honors student is responsible for scheduling regular meetings with advisors, preferably every 7-10 days. Responsibility for arranging meeting times, establishing a research plan, and creating an outline lies entirely with the student, but the Advisor should help advise students to carry out these important organizational tasks. If a Thesis Advisor has concerns about the progress of a student, those concerns should be discussed with the student and also with the Honors Director, if needed. The Thesis Advisor must be able to attend the final thesis presentation and determines the final grade for both the written project and the oral defense. More details about the grading process can be found in the section on Grading Guidelines.

*\*Students whose projects are interdisciplinary or combine research from distinct areas of study may invite more than one Advisor to help guide the project.*

**Second Reader (Optional)**

The Second Reader also is an expert in a field of study closely related to the thesis topic chosen by the student. The Second Reader for the Thesis project is not required to meet every 10 days with the student. Typically, this role involves reading and providing feedback on the finalized draft of the written Thesis project. The final draft must be sent to the Second Reader at least two weeks prior to the final oral presentation. The Second Reader is invited to attend the final oral presentation. Finally, the Second Reader will engage in dialogue with the Thesis Advisor to help determine the final grade for both the written thesis and the oral defense.

# Honors Thesis Proposal

For the Honors Thesis proposal each student develops: a thesis statement, a project outline, an initial bibliography, a working abstract, and a timeline for project completion. The proposal serves, in part, to organize your ideas and chart your course of action so that you can successfully communicate your plan to your Thesis Advisor.

The Thesis Proposal must include the following components:

* Thesis Statement/ Research Question/ Project Goal
* Abstract
* Outline
* Annotated Literature Review
* Prospective Rubric(s)
* Project Timeline
* Signed Record of Completion

At the end of the Honors Thesis Seminar you will submit your full Honors Thesis Proposal for approval to your Thesis Advisor. After your Advisor reviews the proposal, please have them sign the Record of Completion to indicate that they approve the project and agree to serve as the Primary Advisor. Once your Advisor has signed the Record of Completion, submit this document to the Honors Director.

*\*If you change your thesis topic after completing your initial proposal in the Honors Thesis Seminar, you must file a new, complete, Honors Thesis Proposal and Record of Completion Form.*

# Rubric Selection

Part of the thesis process includes selecting project specific rubrics. Each thesis student will select 2-4 of the AAC&U Value Rubrics that you determine relevant and useful for guiding your thesis project. The rubrics you select for your project should address the content and/or process of your particular thesis project.

Once you have made an initial review and pre-selection of the rubrics, you should invite your Thesis Advisor to discuss the rubrics with you to decide if they are a good fit and which would be best if you need to narrow your selection.

In addition to the content rubrics selected for each individual project, all students in the course will be evaluated according to both the *Written Communication* and the *Oral Communication* rubrics.

# Grading Guidelines

The final grade for HON 4950 is determined by the Thesis Advisor(s) and the Honors Director. The final grade should consider the entire process including the research process, regular communication from the student, the final written paper and the final oral presentation. The following percentages are assigned to the five main course elements:

* Attendance and Participation: Regular communication with student: 10%
* On-time completion of writing goals: 20%
* Practice Presentation: 10%
* Oral Presentation: 20%
* Written Thesis: 40%

**Rubrics** on *Written Communication* and *Oral Communication* for the final paper and final oral presentation will be provided. Each student also chooses two additional rubrics from the AAC&U rubrics, related to the content and process of the project. These rubrics should be reviewed and approved by the Thesis Advisor.

**Incomplete projects**: The revised final draft of the written thesis must be submitted on time in order for the student successfully complete the Honors Thesis. If revisions have not been completed on time, the Thesis Advisor may reduce the final grade or decide to give the student a grade of incomplete. An incomplete should only be given in rare and extenuating circumstances. If an incomplete is given, the student will work with their Advisor and the Honors Director to set a timeline for project completion.

**Grade submission**: Before the official due date for grades, each Thesis Advisor will email the Honors Director the student’s grade for the thesis course. As the instructor of record, the Honors Director is responsible for submitting the grade for the thesis course.

**Grading Criteria:** *Please remember that the Honors Thesis must be completed with a B- or better in order to count for Honors credit*.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| A | * + Demonstrates outstanding verbal and written ability   + Demonstrates preparation for class by discussing readings   + Independently explores readings, activities, and resources and shares these in class   + Shows critical thinking, insight and ability to integrate course material   + Misses no more than three class hours during the course of the semester   + Participates actively in class   + Turns all course material in by deadlines |
| B | * + Demonstrates good verbal, written and independent thinking ability   + Shows initiative by fulfilling more than basic course requirements   + Attends class regularly and participates in class discussions   + Meets course deadlines   + Demonstrates an understanding of course materials |
| C | * + Fulfills basic course requirements   + Attends class inconsistently   + Fails to meet all course deadlines   + Demonstrates average verbal, written and critical thinking ability |

# Format for the Oral Presentation at the Honors Thesis Symposium

**Practice Presentation**

All Thesis students will be required to complete a practice presentation in the 3 weeks prior to the Honors Thesis Symposium. The Honors Director will attend the practice session along with the Thesis Advisor(s). The Honors Program Coordinator and other students from the Honors Thesis Seminar and/or Honors Thesis courses are also welcome to attend. This is an opportunity to provide thesis students with constructive feedback to help clarify and polish the final presentation before the Symposium.

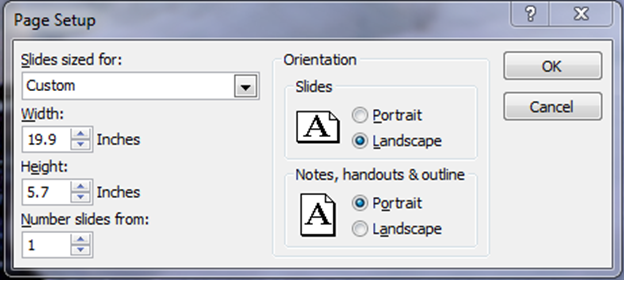
**Presentation at Honors Thesis Symposium**

All thesis presentations will take place at the Honors Thesis Symposium held in the CAVEA (located in room 420 of the Jordan Success Building) during the final week of classes. The presentations will be organized into panel sessions lasting approximately 1-1.5 hours depending upon the number of presenters (usually three per panel). Each student will have 15-20 minutes to present depending upon the number of presentations scheduled that day. Twenty minutes are reserved for questions after all the students in the panel finish their presentations. Thesis Advisors will be invited to ask questions first. If there is any remaining time, other questions from the wider audience will be addressed. Thesis Advisors are asked to commit to attending the final oral presentation of their student. If there are scheduling concerns, please contact the Honors Director as soon as possible so that schedules can be accommodated.

**CAVEA Template**

The CAVEA Theater Front Screen is a unique display with a resolution of 3688 x 1050, very different from the common resolutions most presenters and presentations are accustomed to. CAVEA can accommodate most presentations in most formats, but using this template will ensure that your presentation looks its best in this unique space.

To set PowerPoint to fit the CAVEA screen (Other presentation software can be used):

* ****Select the ‘Design’ tab
* Select ‘Page Setup’
* Set ‘Custom’ size
* Width: 19.9 inches
* Height: 5.7 inches

# Format for Written Thesis

Honors theses come in a variety of formats but all include a formal written thesis component and a formal oral thesis presentation. Although the thesis format will vary according to the discipline, the following sample formats among others have been utilized by students in the past:

* Research paper/ Critical analysis
* Philosophical treatise
* Portfolio of creative work and critical reflection
* Fine arts display or performance and critical reflection
* Business plan
* Education unit
* Action project design
* Etc…

Each student will consult with their faculty Advisor in order to decide upon the proper format, including the citation style. Students are encouraged to use the citation style most typically associated with their field. A cover page is required for the digital archive; the formatting template for the cover page will be provided in class.

# Recognition for Honors Program and Honors Thesis Completion

**Honors Program Completion**

Students who complete the *full requirements for the Honors Program* will receive the following forms of recognition:

* Certificates of Completion for both the Honors Thesis and the Honors Program
* Honors Cords to be worn at graduation
* Honors Thesis pin
* Recognition in program at Commencement
* Honors designation on academic transcripts

**Honors Thesis Completion**

Thesis-onlystudents who complete *only the requirements for the Honors Thesis* will receive the following forms of recognition:

* Certificate of Completion for the Honors Thesis
* Honors Thesis pin
* Honors courses taken will be listed on the academic transcript

**Honors Thesis Luncheon**

The Honors Thesis Symposium includes a luncheon to celebrate the completion of the thesis projects. Students who have completed all Honors Program requirements will receive their certificates of completion, honors cords, and the Honors Thesis pin at the luncheon. Students who have completed the thesis project will receive their certificate of completion and the Honors Thesis pin. All Thesis Advisors will receive a formal invitation to the luncheon. Family and friends are welcome and encouraged to attend the Symposium as well as the Luncheon.

# Digital Archive Instructions

One of the requirements to complete your Honors Thesis (and the course) is to submit your thesis to the Auraria Library Digital Archive. This archive allows future honor students to reference past work, as well as allowing other scholars to read and use your research.

In order to submit your honors thesis to the Auraria Library Digital Archive, please read about the process here: <http://digital.auraria.edu/air/submitresearch>

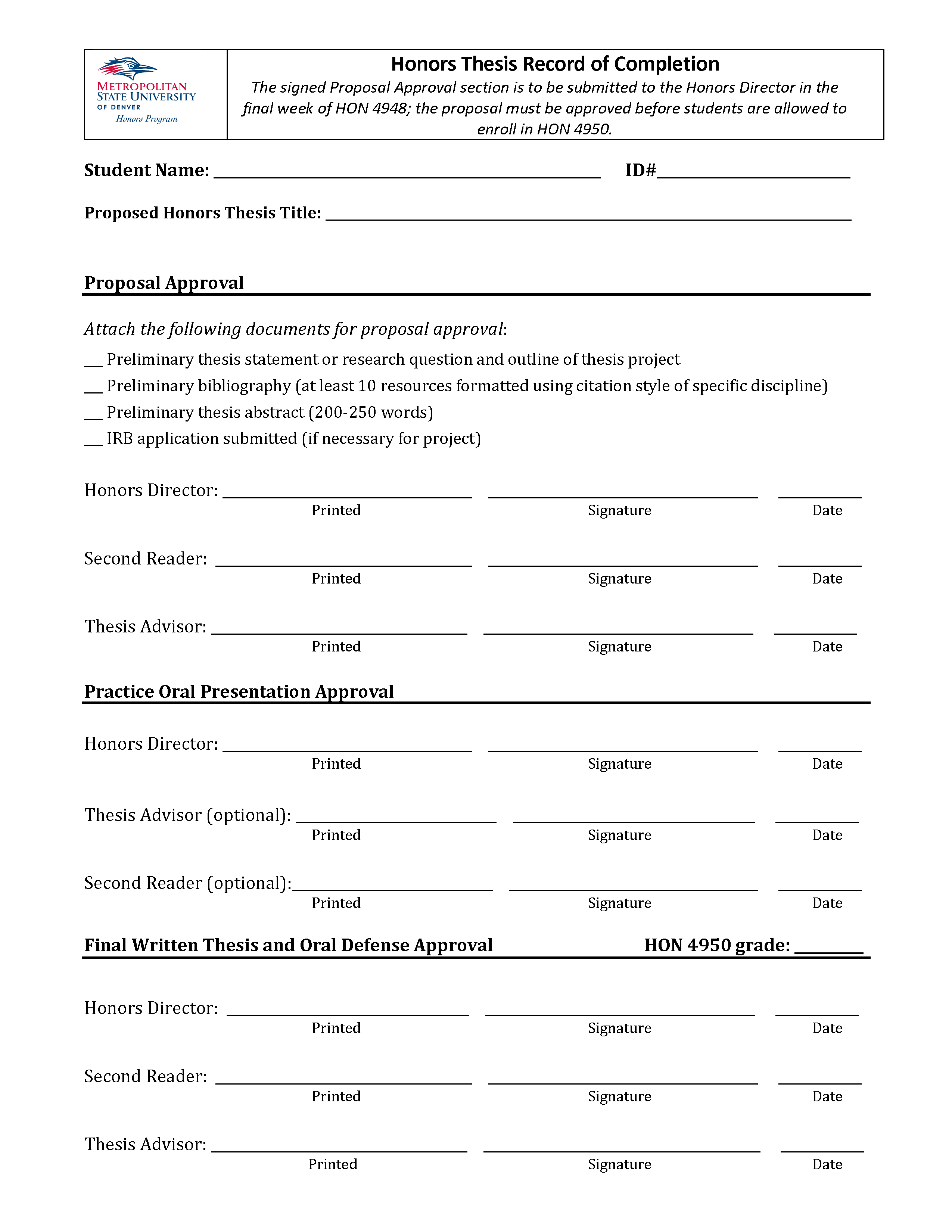
Follow the detailed registration and submission instructions here:

<http://digital.auraria.edu/design/aggregations/air/uploads/Self%20Submission%20Instructions.pdf>

While registering, you must click the box at the end of the form indicating that you would like to submit materials to the repository. After registering, the system administrator will approve the request within 24 hours and e-mail you to notify you of approval. At this point you will be able to submit your thesis to the repository. Submitting means you and other visitors to the site will be able to freely and perpetually access your thesis. It will be preserved for the life of the University and is securely backed up in two non-co-located servers. Submitting does not strip you of your rights as an author: you may request for your thesis to be removed from the repository at any time and you will always retain your copyright. The repository simply asks for the non-exclusive right to host a copy in our repository and make it freely available.

If you have any questions, please contact Matthew Mariner, Digital Collections Manager of Auraria Library, at [matthew.mariner@ucdenver.edu](mailto:matthew.mariner@ucdenver.edu).

# Thesis Record of Completion Form



# Institutional Review Board (IRB)

The Human Subject Protections Program (HSPP) provides professional support to MSU Denver's Institutional Review Board (IRB). IRB oversight is an essential component of human subjects protection. The Review Board is composed of members of the MSU Denver faculty and staff and the community at-large. Members of the IRB are tasked with protecting the rights and welfare of participants in research studies.

The IRB reviews and makes determinations on proposed human subjects research that is conducted by or in collaboration with MSU Denver faculty, staff, and/or students. The IRB follows regulatory requirements and the ethical principles of **Respect for Persons**, **Beneficence**, and **Justice** in reviewing research that involves participants and/or identifiable private information.

Not all Honors students will need to go through the IRB process. Only projects involving human subjects research will need to complete the IRB process.

There are three types of IRB review that we will cover in class during Thesis Honors Seminar:

* Exempt Review
* Expedited Review
* Full Review

The IRB review process takes time and research protocols are reviewed on a first-come, first-serve basis. The IRB's ability to conduct a timely review of your research is dependent upon the quality and clarity of your submission. Please plan accordingly and develop a clear and detailed research plan.

For more information please visit the website: <https://www.msudenver.edu/irb/>

# Campus Resources (Auraria Library, Writing Center, etc.)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Dr. Megan Hughes-Zarzo  Instructor for Honors Thesis Seminar | Contact:  [mhughes47@msudenver.edu](mailto:mhughes47@msudenver.edu)  303.615.1158 |
| Dr. Rebecca Forgash  Assistant Instructor for Honors Thesis Seminar | Contact:  [rforgash@msudenver.edu](mailto:rforgash@msudenver.edu) |
| Shayla Bischoff  Honors student TA for the Honors Thesis Seminar | Contact:  [sbischof@msudenver.edu](mailto:sbischof@msudenver.edu) |
| Undergraduate Research Center | Contact:  Dr. Mandi A. Schaeffer Fry [aschaef6@msudenver.edu](mailto:aschaef6@msudenver.edu) |
| Auraria Library | Contact:  Eric Baker [ebaker4@msudenver.edu](mailto:ebaker4@msudenver.edu) |
| Writing Center | Contacts:  Dr. Elizabeth Kleinfeld, Writing Center Director [ekleinfe@msudenver.edu](mailto:ekleinfe@msudenver.edu)  Erienne Romaine  [eromain1@msudenver.edu](mailto:eromain1@msudenver.edu) |
| IRB | Contact:  Dr. Jeffrey Helton [jhelton2@msudenver.edu](mailto:jhelton2@msudenver.edu)  Dr. Michael Heathcote [mheathco@msudenver.edu](mailto:mheathco@msudenver.edu) |
| Department of Communication Design | Contact:  Lisa Abendroth, Professor & Communication Design Program Coordinator [abendrot@msudenver.edu](mailto:abendrot@msudenver.edu)  Shawn Meek, Assistant Professor in Communication Design  [smeek3@msudenver.edu](mailto:smeek3@msudenver.edu) |
| Auraria Library Digital Media Studio   * Support and training for digital imaging and presentation software, including PowerPoint, Adobe Photoshop, and Adobe InDesign | Contact:  Website: [dms@auraria.edu](mailto:dms@auraria.edu)  E-mail: [dms@ucdenver.edu](mailto:dms@ucdenver.edu)  Phone: [(303) 315-7718](tel:13033157718) |
| CAVEA  Center for Advanced Visualization and Experiential Analysis | Contacts:Ned Hoewisch, CAVEA Office and Events Manager and AV/IT questions [nedhwsch@msudenver.edu](mailto:nedhwsch@msudenver.edu) |
| Career Services | Contacts: Amy Bechtum, Associate Director and College of Business Liaison [abechtum@msudenver.edu](mailto:abechtum@msudenver.edu) |

# Opportunities for Financial Support

Unfortunately at this time, the Honors Program does not provide funding for individual thesis projects. There are, however, some campus opportunities for scholarship or financial support. The most utilized grant is the Undergraduate Research Grant. The Undergraduate Research Grant (UGR) is open to all majors at MSU Denver. You must apply to acquire the grant and you must also agree to present at the yearly UGR conference in April. The grant award is $500. We highly encourage all honors students to take advantage of the Undergraduate Research Conference, as it serves as an excellent practice for the Honors Thesis Symposium.

We always encourage students to look for research grants or other means of financial support within their academic department or outside of the university.

Undergraduate Research Conference Website:

<https://www.msudenver.edu/undergraduate-research-program/undergraduateresearchconference/>

# Opportunities for Presenting Thesis Research Locally, Regionally, and Nationally

**MSU Denver Undergraduate Research Conference**

The annual Undergraduate Research Conference at MSU Denver is a Symposium of Scholarly Works and Creative Projects that invites students to share their projects each April. This conference represents an opportunity to gain valuable experience developing your project, presenting your ideas to an audience, and fielding questions about your work. Presenting at the conference allows students to build many of the skills that graduate programs and potential employees look for in candidates. You will also make connections with other MSU Denver student researchers and faculty.

Students are invited to present their work individually or in a group, and at various stages of completion; you can consider presenting scholarly projects/research that you've already completed, but partially completed projects are also welcome. Talk with your faculty mentor or the Honors Director to determine whether this would be a good route for you.

This conference is free to MSU Denver students.

**Western Regional Honors Council**

The Western Regional Honors Council (WRHC) is a professional organization of faculty, administrators, and students dedicated to the promotion and advancement of undergraduate honors education. The WRHC represents honors programs and honors colleges at institutions of higher learning across the 13-state Western Region through an annual conference, the Western Regional Honors Council Conference.

Through sharing information about honors programs, honors colleges, and best honors practices region-wide, the WRHC hopes to create an intellectual, programmatic and administrative network of resources aimed at helping the region’s honors programs and honors colleges grow and thrive.

Each spring, the MSU Denver Honors program promotes the WRHC, helps students submit proposals, and supports them as they travel to the conference to share their work. The travel and accommodations are typically funded by the Honors Program or MSU Denver Student Travel. Please consult with the honors staff to learn more about this opportunity.

[**National Collegiate Honors Council**](https://www.nchchonors.org/events/nchc19) **Conference**

The National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) is a unique educational organization designed to support and promote undergraduate honors education. NCHC has nearly 900 member institutions and several hundred individual members, impacting over 330,000 honors students. NCHC provides its members with resources, training opportunities, and collaborative events to build and sustain honors programs and their curriculum. Students also have access to honors scholarships and exclusive events through NCHC and its members.

The National Collegiate Honors Council Conference is an annual conference held in the fall that invites honors students, staff, and faculty to share their individual research projects and projects related to honors education. This comprehensive conference connects Honors Programs across the nation and represents a wonderful opportunity to get involved in the world of Honors. Application deadlines are typically in early April. Please consult with Honors staff for more information.

**MSU Denver Student Travel Program**

The MSU Denver Student Travel Program is a student fee funded program that provides travel grants for MSU Denver students. These grants help fund the cost of transportation, registration and lodging for qualified individuals or student groups wishing to attend regional, national, or international professional development events/meetings. Individual students, pairs or student groups may apply for funding once each fiscal year (July 1 – June 30).

*Qualifying Professional Development Events*

The following forms of professional development are eligible for program participation:

* Conferences/conventions/professional meetings
* Seminars
* Workshops
* Competitions (non-athletic, co-curricular only)

*Funding Overview*

* Individual Funding - One student presenting original research at a professional development event. Eligible for up to $625.
* Pair Funding - Two students presenting original research at a professional development event. Eligible for up to $1,250.
* Group Funding - Three or more students who just want to attend a professional development event. Group funding does not require the students to present at the professional development event. Eligible for up to $1,875.

# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

**What is a thesis?**

A thesis is an opportunity for students to work closely with your thesis advisor on a comprehensive independent research or creative endeavor that brings to a conclusion your undergraduate academic experience.

This is not meant to be a compilation of previous term papers. This is meant to be original work created expressly for the fulfillment of the Thesis requirement and the Honors Program.

A thesis is not just another research paper. It is more substantial. A thesis will thoroughly investigate previous research on a topic and (most importantly) it will include your own insights and contributions to the topic emanating from your critical engagement in the process.

Completing a thesis is a rigorous and time-consuming endeavor, so you should select a topic that is intellectually exciting, challenging, and fun.

**How long is a thesis?**

The Thesis needs to be long enough to adequately address your topic. Typically, thesis projects are 30-70 pages. Some projects, especially STEM projects involving in-depth labs or field research may require a shorter written thesis. Please consult with your Thesis Advisors, as well as the Honors Director for guidelines regarding paper length for your topic.

**When should I get started?**

As soon as you can. One way to get started is to attend the Honors Thesis Symposium, the Undergraduate Research Conference (UGR) or any other professional/academic conferences. All Honors students also are required to complete a one-credit Honors Thesis Seminar course (HON 4948) the semester or two before registering for HON 4950 (Honors Senior Thesis). While completing HON 4948, students will brainstorm ideas for their thesis and begin working on the thesis proposal. During HON 4948, you will prepare the materials needed to advance for the Honors Senior Thesis.