

**EASTERN MICHIGAN  
UNIVERSITY  
THE HONORS  
COLLEGE**



**Senior Thesis Advisor  
Handbook**

2018-20139

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*The Eastern Michigan University Honors College provides the intimacy of a small, liberal arts education within the context of a large, comprehensive university. To this end, both educational and cultural experiences for EMU's intellectually talented and motivated students are provided through challenging Honors courses and extra-curricular activities that encourage scholarly curiosity, leadership, civic engagement, and diversity. The Honors College offers undergraduate students opportunities for a wide range of experiences that aid in the development of their appreciation for creativity, the arts, sciences, critical issues facing contemporary society, and diversity among people and their cultures.*

Office: 734.487.0341 or 734.487.0345  
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Web Site: <http://www.emich.edu/honors/>

## **The Senior Honors Thesis/Creative Project**

The Senior Honors Thesis or Project is the major culminating experience for graduating with Departmental Honors. It signifies your movement into the professional conversation in your field of study and showcases the students accomplishments as they move from undergraduate study and research to graduate school or the workplace setting. As you work with students who are completing the Senior Thesis/Creative Project, please keep the following in mind.

- All Departmental Honors students must complete a Senior Honors Thesis/Creative Project.
- Attendance at a Senior Thesis/Creative Project Workshop is required before students submit their Senior Thesis/Creative Project proposal.
- Regardless of the type of project, written components are required.
- Both academic and Honors credit must be earned for the Thesis/Creative Project, usually but not always through three hours of independent study.

Some departments require that students complete a specific Honors thesis seminar or a research course, so students should be sure to check with their Honors advisor about requirements in their specific area.

The thesis/project may take various forms.

- a lengthy research paper
- a public performance
- a documented lab experiment
- a computer program, a work of art
- a two-page mathematical proof

Whatever form it takes, it should be a demanding exercise (three hours of credit presupposes about 150 hours of work), and the result should demonstrate exceptional skill and understanding.

If students complete a project instead of a thesis, they will still be required to provide a written component. Typically, this would include prefatory written material that would allow a reader to understand the context of their work and a reflective piece that describes the impact of the project on future work.

## Planning the Project

As students prepare for their Senior Thesis/Creative Project, there are a number of things they should keep in mind.

***Building upon genuine interest and questions.*** This culminating project should build upon questions and areas of interest that students have identified during their undergraduate study. Questions students can consider include: What areas interest you? What questions do you find fascinating? Do they build upon existing undergraduate research that you are doing? If so, how do they extend the research? Often it is helpful for students to keep a notebook in which they log in observations, questions, and areas of interest throughout their exploration in the major/minor. These materials will help shape their Honors Thesis/Project.

***Planning for success.*** Successful projects must be carefully planned in advance. Students should be cautioned to not wait until the semester they intend to graduate before beginning their thesis work. The best time to begin is toward the end of their junior year or after they've earned at least six hours of Departmental Honors credit.

At that time they may want to meeting with their Departmental Honors Advisor (lists are available on the Honors website) to discuss the thesis/project. However, if they are working directly with a faculty member who is supervising the project, they choose to meet with the Departmental Advisor further into the process.

As the Faculty Mentor for the project and one knowledgeable in the subject, students will come to you for direction and criticism. In addition, you will evaluate the final product and conduct any oral or written defense that may be required. Students are encouraged to meet with their faculty mentor often to refine the scope of your project, agree on a project description, and negotiate such matters as format, methodology, and deadlines.

***Developing the Senior Thesis/Creative Project Proposal.*** Once students have established the nature of their thesis or project, they must submit a Senior Thesis Application to the Honors office. This application includes a list of their Departmental Honors courses as well as a brief description of the thesis. The proposal will be signed/approved by the Faculty Mentor, Departmental Honors Advisor, and Honors Director.

***Establishing timelines.*** To allow sufficient time for the project to be completed, students should consider establishing a timeline that they can use to move through the project. While the timeline can always be adjusted, having a clear idea of what will be completed during each semester will be very helpful.

As with any long-term project, students may run into unexpected delays along the way. For that reason, they should complete much of the actual work during the first semester of their senior year. Since the thesis must be completed and submitted to both the academic department and the Honors office *before the student graduates*, they do not want to jeopardize graduation with Departmental Honors by waiting until the last minute.

Additionally, students should expect that everyone who signs off on the thesis will want to read it and possibly give feedback that will need to be incorporated into the work before it is approved. Students should leave enough time at the end of the semester to obtain these signatures.

***Securing Approvals.*** The completed thesis signature page must be signed by the supervising instructor, Departmental Honors Advisor, Department Head, and the Honors Director. Students are responsible for obtaining the first three of these signatures. Once this is done, the thesis should be delivered to the Honors office

- *three* copies of the completed thesis with *three* signed signature pages
- *one* electronic copy of your Honors thesis project in one file formatted for either Microsoft Word or Rich Text Format (.rtf)
- *one copy of the Library Release Forms*
- *one* copy of your graded Honors Thesis Project Contract.

The Honors Director will review and sign the thesis before sending it for binding. Bound copies will be sent to the student and the department. One bound copy will be kept in the Honors College and an electronic version of the thesis will be sent to Halle Library. Students should anticipate that everyone who signs off on the thesis may want to provide feedback that will need to be incorporated into the work before it is approved, so students should plan their time accordingly.

***Moving to Publication.*** Although many thesis projects will be extended research papers, some will involve public performances, works of art, lab experiments, and the like. Remember that all projects *must include a written component* that carefully documents the research or creative activity. Controlled scientific experiments, for example, may be accompanied by a lab report, charts, graphs, and tables; creative projects may be documented by a journal, explanations of performance decisions, photographs, annotated scripts and scores, or a detailed explanation of methods chosen and why. Projects that do not reflect a traditional research format must include a context to help the reader understand the importance of the project and influences that helped shape your thinking as well as a reflection that helps others understand the importance of the project to you and next steps that might emerge in future work. (See sample Honors theses at <http://commons.emich.edu/honors>).

The final draft thesis must meet certain formal guidelines. It must be word processed using a 12 point font (preferably a Times based font), double-spaced on 8 1/2" x 11" paper, leaving a 1 1/2" left-side margin and 1" at top, bottom, and right sides. It must begin with a Title Page (see sample in this packet), followed by a Table of Contents. Charts, graphs, tables, and illustrations may be incorporated into the main body of the text or shown as appendices. The main body should be followed by Endnotes, Bibliography, and Appendices, if they are appropriate.

**It is the student's responsibility** to ensure that the manuscript is free of grammatical, mechanical, and stylistic errors. There should be no visible erasures, strikeouts, or hand-corrections. Clear, clean photocopies are acceptable. Since the original manuscript will be copied and bound, it should not be stapled or punched. *Unless your department requires a particular style manual*, you should follow the latest MLA (Modern Language Association) Style sheet. The thesis/project will be posted on Digital Commons and, hence, be available to all researchers and employers who wish to reference the work. Therefore, it is imperative that the written product be carefully edited to reflect the student's skill as a writer and researcher.

***Receiving Honors Credit.*** As noted earlier, students must earn both academic and Honors credit for the thesis. To earn academic credit, they will generally take an independent study through which they will complete the thesis. It is also possible to tie the thesis to a specific course in the area in which they are earning Departmental Honors. The second option is not recommended as this will add three credits of work to an existing course (e.g. a three credit course contracted for the thesis would carry an expected commitment of a six credit course). To earn Honors credit, students must submit an Honors Contract for this course. Students will need to check with their Departmental Honors Advisor to see if there is a specific course they need to take for thesis credit.

The completed, signed thesis, along with the graded Honors Contract, is due in the Honors office by the project deadline specified on the contract ( no later than two weeks prior to anticipated graduation). Because it may take some time to obtain the required signatures, students should try to have it completed a week or two earlier. *If students need extra time, they must obtain the written permission of the Honors Director.* While an extension will be granted when possible, the Honors College must have the completed thesis no later than the last day of the semester in which the student intends to graduate. The Honors College staff wants students to complete the thesis/project successfully, and we'll do whatever we can to help. However, we must send grades to Records and Registration in a timely fashion, so our timelines are generally not negotiable. If we do not have the thesis by the end of the student's last semester, they may not graduate with Departmental Honors during the semester they planned to graduate. **It is helpful to plan for the Senior Thesis/Project to come to the Honors College by April 1<sup>st</sup> to allow time for additional work as needed.**

***Applying for Undergraduate Fellowship Awards.*** Many Honors students apply for Undergraduate Fellowships to help support their research. Applications for UG Fellowships are due October 15 (Winter) and March 15 (Summer and Fall). Honors Fellowships require collaboration from a faculty mentor. Approximately 45 awards are made annually based on faculty review of applications. Applications are available on the Honors website and from the Honors College.

***Senior Thesis Awards.*** The Honors College offers Senior Thesis Awards annually for particularly well executed projects. These awards are very competitive and are intended to acknowledge outstanding work. Application forms are available in the Honors College office, from the Honors website, and attached to this workshop packet. Proposals are judged on the basis of quality of the proposal and the availability of funding. The

application deadline is January 15<sup>th</sup> and eligible theses must be completed between July 1, 2012 and June 30, 2013.

### **Summary**

Senior Thesis/Creative Project mentors are invited to contact the Honors College at any time. Honors College staff will gladly meet with groups of students or faculty in department to help with Honors related questions, functions, or planning.

### **Attachments**

- A. Senior Thesis Check List
- B. Human Subjects Review Request
- C. Rights and Permission Form for  
Electronic Honors Senior Thesis
- D. Senior Thesis Application
- E. Signature Page

## Attachment A

### Honors College Senior Thesis Check List

The listing below has been created to support planning through the Senior Thesis process.

\_\_\_\_\_ Throughout your undergraduate studies, make notes of areas of particular interest, questions that seem most intriguing, and new ideas that emerge from other research projects.

\_\_\_\_\_ At the end of your junior year, or after completing six (6) Departmental Honors credits, set up a meeting with your Departmental Honors Advisor.

\_\_\_\_\_ Obtain a Faculty Sponsor/Mentor from your department and set up a meeting for discussion of your project.

\_\_\_\_\_ Once you have agreed on your project with the Departmental Honors Advisor and the Faculty Sponsor, complete the Senior Thesis Proposal with a brief description of the project and submit to the Honors Office.

\_\_\_\_\_ Obtain Human Subjects approval, as necessary. Be sure to check with your Departmental Honors Advisor to determine if approval is needed in your College as well as the timeline for obtaining approval.

\_\_\_\_\_ Complete as much work as possible in the next-to-last semester before graduation.

\_\_\_\_\_ Fill out the two library forms and turn them in with your Senior Thesis.

\_\_\_\_\_ Be SURE to edit your thesis carefully and seek help from an editor as needed. The thesis will be published on Digital Commons so you will want it to reflect your very best work.

\_\_\_\_\_ Your completed senior thesis must be read and signed by your faculty sponsor(s), the Departmental Honors Adviser, and Department Head prior to its submission to the Director of the Honors College. Make sure you leave sufficient time for this process in addition to time for possible changes/corrections!



**Attachment B**

**Eastern Michigan University  
University Human Subjects Review Committee (UHSRC)  
REQUEST FOR HUMAN SUBJECTS APPROVAL**

Use this form for initial approvals and major protocol modifications. For minor changes, please use the *Minor Modification* form. To renew an approval after one year, please use the *Continuation Form*.

**CHECK ONE**

FACULTY/STAFF                       GRAD Student                       UG Student

Non-EMU PI

**PROJECT TYPE – STUDENTS**

Dissertation                       Master's Thesis GR Project

Honor's Thesis UG Project

**Graduate and Undergraduate student researchers** conducting minimal risk undergraduate or graduate theses/projects (doctoral non-dissertation research) should submit to the appropriate college-level committee. Upload materials as follows and submit one paper copy to the identified office:

**College of Arts and Science (<http://commons.emich.edu/cashs/>), 200 Boone Hall**

**College of Business (<http://commons.emich.edu/cobhs/>), 473 Owen**

**College of Education (<http://commons.emich.edu/coehs/>), 310 Porter**

**College of Health and Human Services (<http://commons.emich.edu/chhs/>), 305 Marshall**

**College of Technology (<http://commons.emich.edu/coths/>), 150 Sill**

If this is your first time using Digital Commons, directions on how to register and submit materials can be found as a link on the website's cover page.

**Attachment C**

EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY  
Rights and Permission Form for  
Electronic Honors Senior Thesis  
Placement in Digital Commons @ EMU

Submit this form to the Honors College for approval and signatures. Retain a copy for your files

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Document title: \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Agreement:**

I hereby grant to Eastern Michigan University and its employees the nonexclusive license to archive and make accessible, under the conditions specified below, my honors thesis in whole or in part in all forms of media, now or hereafter known. This is a license rather than an assignment, and I, therefore, retain all other ownership rights to the copyright of the honors thesis. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of this honors thesis. In addition to the unrestricted display of the bibliographic information and the abstract, I agree that the above mentioned document be placed in Eastern Michigan University's institutional repository with the following status (choose one option):

- Release the entire work immediately for access worldwide.
- Provide access to the entire work only to Eastern Michigan University Library and patrons. At the end of the one-year period, either I or Eastern Michigan University Library may request an extension for an additional one year. At the end of the one-year secure period (or its extension, if such is requested), the work will be released for access worldwide. I understand that my work may only be secured from view for a total of two years. If I choose to release the work for worldwide access sooner, I will contact the Eastern Michigan University Library, 955 West Circle Drive, Ypsilanti, MI 48917-2207.
- Secure the entire work for patent and/or proprietary purposes for a period of one year, providing no access to any part of the work. During this period, I, the copyright owner, also agree not to exercise my ownership rights, including public use in works, without prior authorization from Eastern Michigan University Library. At the end of the one-year period, either I or Eastern Michigan University Library may request an extension for an additional year. At the end of the one-year secure period (or its extension, if such is requested), the work will be released for access worldwide. I understand that my work may only be secured from view for a total of two years. If I choose to release the work for worldwide access sooner, I will contact the Eastern Michigan University Library, 955 West Circle Drive, Ypsilanti, MI 48917-2207.

The undersigned agrees to abide by the statements above, and agrees that this approval form updates any and all previous approval forms submitted theretofore.

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This document has received final approval.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Director, Honors College

**EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY**  
**Electronic Format Information Sheet**  
**Electronic Honors Senior Thesis**  
**Placement in Digital Commons @ EMU**

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Middle Name/Initial: \_\_\_\_\_

(The official form of your name used for publication purposes. Please note that middle name or initial is optional.)

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (primary): \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (secondary): \_\_\_\_\_

Dept./School: \_\_\_\_\_ Primary Advisor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Honors Senior Thesis Title: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Does your honors senior thesis have an abstract?

If your honors thesis does not have an abstract, you can provide a brief abstract (no more than 250 words) here:

Key words:

(List up to 6 key words or phrases, preferably words or phrases that do not appear in your senior thesis' title or abstract)

Do you have any supplementary files?

If so, what formats are these supplementary files (video, audio, images, for example)?

Please save this form. Use the naming convention of your FirstnameLastnameThesiseyear (example, LoriSmithThesis2012).

Send a copy of this completed form as an attachment to [rsipe@emich.edu](mailto:rsipe@emich.edu).

**Attachment D**

REG	COPY	MDB	COB	H

**HONORS COLLEGE**

**SENIOR THESIS APPLICATION**

**DIRECTIONS:**

1. Fill in all required information.
2. Obtain instructor and departmental honors adviser signatures.
3. Return original to the Honors College **prior** to the semester in which you plan to register for the Honors Senior Thesis.
4. Retain a copy of this completed form for your records.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

LOCAL PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

MAJOR(S) \_\_\_\_\_

MINOR(S) \_\_\_\_\_

DEPARTMENTAL HONORS WORK COMPLETED:

COURSES:

1) \_\_\_\_\_ 2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_ 4) \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL HOURS \_\_\_\_\_

EXPECTED SEMESTER OF THESIS COMPLETION:

\_\_\_\_\_

TENTATIVE THESIS TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

THESIS PROJECT DESCRIPTION\*

Attach a one-page proposal of your senior thesis project. Your proposal must include the following:

- The topic and scope of the project
- The proposed methodology (e.g. laboratory research, library or archival research, interviews, field work, etc.)
- Form of the completed thesis (e.g. a 40-60 page research paper, creative musical recital, detailed lab report)

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Student Print Signature

Date

---

Student Signature

Date

---

Supervising Faculty Signature

Date

---

Supervising Faculty Signature

Date

---

Departmental Honors Advisor Signature

Date

---

Departmental Honors Advisor Signature

Date

---

Honors College Director Signature

Date

\* Supervising Faculty Member: This form authorizes the culminating project of this student's undergraduate Honors experience within the major (or minor). By signing you are approving the project in principle as acceptable based on the guidelines for the Senior Thesis as developed by the Honors College and your home department.

**Attachment E**

TITLE OF YOUR PAPER IN ALL CAPS

By

Name

A Senior Thesis Submitted to the

Eastern Michigan University

Honors College

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Graduation

with Honors in \_\_\_\_\_ (include the department name)

Approved at Ypsilanti, Michigan, on this date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervising Instructor (Print Name and have signed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Honors Advisor (Print Name and have signed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Department Head (Print Name and have signed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Honors Director (Print Name and have signed)