

The William O. Douglas Honors College

Thesis Guidelines

Overview

The William O. Douglas Honors College Thesis is the capstone experience and final product of the Upper Division Honors program. The thesis is a sustained, original, and critical examination of a central interdisciplinary research question, developed under the guidance of a faculty mentor and the instructor for the DHC research and writing skills course series (DHC 310, 401 and 497). The thesis represents a mature synthesis of research skills, critical thinking, and competent writing.

This guide is intended to help students in the Douglas Honors College form a thesis advisory committee, formulate an interdisciplinary topic, and navigate the research, writing and presentation of the DHC Honors thesis.

Thesis Requirements

Length

The thesis should be a maximum of 10,000 words, excluding the title page, abstract, works cited/bibliography pages, endnotes, tables, figures, images, and appendices.

Specific requirements will vary for different types of projects, such as a scientific or creative project of significant content, where the written portion may be significantly shorter in length. Exact requirements should be worked out in advance with the faculty mentor and the Director of the DHC.

Critical Engagement

The Senior Honors Thesis should be an original research project that engages critically not only with relevant secondary literature but also with primary sources.

Originality

Scholarly work builds upon and responds to existing bodies of research and literature. It is extremely important to acknowledge the work of other scholars, while also making original contributions that engage with conversations taking place within relevant fields.

Interdisciplinarity

The DHC is an interdisciplinary program and your senior honors thesis should reflect that. While the main topic and research question of your thesis will be based in one particular discipline or major, it should also draw upon the literature and methodology of other disciplines.

Mechanics

Your thesis should be well written, organized, clear, and free of all grammatical and mechanical errors. You are writing for a general audience, so when possible avoid jargon and explain relevant concepts fully.

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Thesis Advisory Committee

Your final thesis advisory committee will be made up of three members: the thesis committee chair, the additional committee member, and the DHC Director. Each member of the committee serves a different role.

Thesis Committee Chair

The thesis committee chair should be a faculty mentor whose area of expertise complements and supports the research question of your thesis.

The faculty mentor/student relationship is very important in the success of a senior honors thesis project and so the selection of the appropriate mentor is a key step in the process. To this end, before you approach a potential mentor, you must write and submit a brief justification for why this faculty mentor is the appropriate choice for your project. This justification should be based on how the faculty mentor is best suited for your research question/goals and will help you advance your thesis.

You are responsible for providing a copy of these guidelines to your thesis committee chair and discussing the DHC requirements and expectations with him or her. You are also responsible for returning the signed Thesis Committee Chair and Student agreement to the DHC Director.

Additional Committee Member

The additional committee member should be a faculty member in a different field from the committee chair. The additional committee member should be chosen in consultation with your committee chair.

You are responsible for providing a copy of these guidelines to your additional committee member and discussing the DHC requirements and expectations with him or her. You are also responsible for returning the signed Additional Committee Member and Student agreement to the DHC Director.

DHC Director

The Director of the DHC will serve as the third member of your thesis advisory committee. The final, completed draft of your thesis will be submitted to the Director of the DHC for final assessment and grading.

The thesis is not completed until it is accepted and signed by all members of the advisory committee. Approval by your committee chair and additional member does not guarantee approval by the Director.

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Coursework

Successful completion of the DHC Senior Honors Thesis involves successfully taking and passing each of the courses in the research and writing sequence, DHC 310, 401 and 497, with a grade of B or above. The classes are sequential. You must pass each class before you can take the next class in the sequence. In other words, if you take an incomplete in DHC 310, you have to resolve that incomplete before you can begin DHC 401. If you have enrolled in the next class in the sequence without passing the preceding class, you will be dropped from the class at the beginning of the term.

DHC 310—Honors Junior Seminar: Elements of Research

This is an exploration of research from an interdisciplinary perspective, including the formulation of a research question, organization of a research process, and preparation of DHC thesis or creative project proposal.

Students must get a grade of B or better in this class to get DHC credit.

DHC 401—Honors Capstone Seminar

Students learn the skills and techniques for the presentation of the results of research. Each student prepares a draft of their DHC thesis or artist's statement for their creative project as part of their coursework.

Students must get a grade of B or better in this class to get DHC credit.

DHC 497—Honors Thesis and/or Creative Project

Completion of honors thesis or creative project. Students must complete a thesis or creative project approved by their faculty advisor and the DHC director and present at SOURCE or Western Regional Honors Council (WRHC) to receive credit for the course.

Students must get a grade of B or better in this class to get DHC credit and have their Senior Honors Thesis approved.

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Deadlines

DHC 310

By week five: submit brief justification for selection of faculty mentor to the Director of the DHC for approval.

By week eight: submit signed Thesis Committee Chair and Student agreement to the Director of the DHC. Email the form to dhc@cwu.edu

Upon completion of the course, students must submit a copy of the completed proposal to the Director of the DHC for approval. Email the form to dhc@cwu.edu

DHC 401

By week five: submit signed Additional Committee Member and Student agreement to the Director of the DHC. Email the form to dhc@cwu.edu

DHC 497

By week ten: submit completed Senior Honors Thesis to the Director of the DHC.
The DHC is committed to environmental sustainability and so the completed thesis will be submitted electronically on Canvas.

Upon approval, you will upload and submit your Senior Honors Thesis to Scholarworks at CWU Library.

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Technical and Formatting Requirements

Fonts & Color

All text should use the Times New Roman or Cambria font. Regular text should be in 12 point font. Reduced type may be used within tables, figures, and appendices. Your thesis must be in black and white. You may, however, use color in tables, figures, and images.

Organization

Begin each section on a new page. Do the same with each element of the front matter (title page, table of contents, abstract, etc.) the reference section, and the appendix.

Try to avoid typing a subheading near the bottom of a page unless there is room for at least two lines of text. Instead you should simply leave a little extra space on the page and begin the heading on the next page.

Page Numbers

Excluding the title page and signatory page, every page in the document, including those with tables and figures, must have page numbers. Use lower case Roman numerals for the front matter and Arabic numbers for the text. The text (or body) of the thesis must begin on page 1.

Title and Signatory Page

Use the template provided at the end of this document for creating your title page. Be sure all committee members are identified by their correct professional titles. The signatures on the signatory page indicate your final thesis is completed and approved. At this time it should be uploaded to the ScholarWorks website on the CWU library and no changes to the content of the thesis will be permitted.

Abstract

This is a one paragraph summary of the content of your thesis that identifies concisely the content of the thesis manuscript and important results of your project (~150 words). The abstract follows the title page, must have the heading ABSTRACT at the top, and is always page Roman numeral i.

Table of Contents

The table of contents is essentially a topic outline of the thesis. It is compiled by listing the headings in the thesis. You may choose to include first-level headings, first- and second-levels, or all levels. Keep in mind there usually is no index in a thesis, and thus a fairly detailed table of contents can serve as a useful guide for the reader. The table of contents must appear immediately after the abstract and should not list the abstract or the table of contents itself.

Be sure the headings listed in the table of contents match word-for-word the headings in the text. Double check to be sure the page numbers are shown. In listing appendices, indicate the title of each appendix. If using display pages, the number of the display page should appear in the table of contents.

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Formatting Final Touches

An honors thesis manuscript should replicate the appearance of professional writing in your discipline. Include the elements of a formal piece of academic work accordingly. For specific questions on organization or labeling, check with your thesis supervisor to see if there is a style guide you should use.

Acknowledgements

Acknowledgments are not a required component of an honors thesis. However, if you want to thank particular colleagues, faculty, librarians, archivists, interviewees, and advisers, here's the place to do it. You should include an acknowledgments page if you received a grant from the university or an outside agency that supported your research. It's a good idea to acknowledge folks who helped you with a major project.

Tables and Figures

A table is a columnar arrangement of information, often numbers, organized to save space and convey relationships at a glance. A rule of thumb to use in deciding whether given materials are tables or figures is that tables can be typed, but figures must be drawn. A figure is a graphic illustration such as a chart, graph, diagram, map, or photograph. Each table and each figure in the text must have a number and caption. Number them consecutively throughout, beginning with 1, or by chapter using a decimal system. It is best to place a table or figure immediately after the first mention of it in the text—on the same page if there is room, or on the following page. Alternatively, tables and/or figures may be grouped together at the end of each chapter. Tables or figures of peripheral importance to the text may be placed in an appendix. Tables and figures must be referred to in the text by number, not by a phrase such as "the following table."

Citations/Footnotes and Works Cited/Reference Pages

These parts of the thesis will vary in format depending on the style guide you are following. Your discipline will use a consistent style guide, such as MLA, APA, or Chicago. Whichever style you are using, stick to the rules and be consistent. It might be helpful to buy an appropriate style guide manual. Consult your thesis supervisor or the CWU Library for more information.

Bibliography/References

A thesis must include a bibliography or reference section listing all works which are referred to in the text, and in some cases other works also consulted in the course of research and writing. The forms used for listing sources in the bibliography/reference section are detailed and complicated, and they vary considerably among academic disciplines. For this reason, you will need to follow a scholarly style manual in your field or perhaps a recent issue of a leading journal as a guide in compiling this section of the thesis.

Appendices

Material that is pertinent but is somewhat tangential or very detailed (raw data, procedural explanations, etc.) may be placed in an appendix. Appendices should be designated A, B, C (not 1, 2, 3 or I, II, III). If there is only one appendix, call it simply Appendix, not Appendix A. Titles of appendices must be listed in the table of contents. Appendix pages must be numbered consecutively with the text of the thesis (do not number the pages A-1, A-2, etc.).

(Title of Thesis)

(Name)

Senior Thesis
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Graduation from
The William O. Douglas Honors College
Central Washington University

(Month of end of quarter), (Year)

Accepted by:

Thesis Committee Chair (Name, Title, Department) Date

Thesis Committee Member (Name, Title, Department) Date

Director, William O. Douglas Honors College Date

DHC Honors Thesis Committee Chair/Student Agreement

I, _____, a student in the Douglas Honors College completing a senior honors thesis, agree to the following terms and conditions:

- I have received and read a copy of the senior thesis guidelines, and provided a copy to my mentor
- I acknowledge the schedule of due dates for various parts of the process, and recognize that my failure to complete assignments by these dates may lead to my failure to receive upper division honors
- I will use the _____ citation style, as agreed with my mentor
- I will communicate regularly with my mentor, updating him or her on my progress, questions, and challenges

_____ (Signed)

_____ (Date)

.....

I, _____, faculty mentor to the above student, agree to the following terms and conditions:

- I have received and read a copy of the senior thesis guidelines
- I acknowledge the schedule of due dates for various parts of the process, and will help the student stay on track for timely completion of assignments. If, however, the student fails to meet these deadlines, I have the right to terminate this agreement
- I will mentor the student in an area of research with which I am familiar
- I will provide timely guidance to the student on conducting research, formulating an argument, and producing a polished finished work.

_____ (Signed)

_____ (Date)

This form should be emailed to dhc@cwu.edu

Additional Committee Member/Student Agreement

I, _____, a student in the Douglas Honors College completing a senior honors thesis, agree to the following terms and conditions:

- I have received and read a copy of the senior thesis guidelines, and provided a copy to my additional committee member
- I acknowledge the schedule of due dates for various parts of the process, and recognize that my failure to complete assignments by these dates may lead to my failure to receive upper division honors
- I will communicate regularly with my committee member, updating him or her on my progress, questions, and challenges

_____(Signed)

_____(Date)

.....

I, _____, thesis committee member to the above student, agree to the following terms and conditions:

- I have received and read a copy of the senior thesis guidelines
- I acknowledge the schedule of due dates for various parts of the process, and will help the student stay on track for timely completion of assignments. If, however, the student fails to meet these deadlines, I have the right to terminate this agreement
- I will assist the student in an area of research with which I am familiar
- I will provide timely guidance to the student on conducting research, formulating an argument, and producing a polished finished work.

_____(Signed)

_____(Date)

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