WHAT IS AN HONORS THESIS?

The Honors thesis provides a culmination to an Honors student’s academic career. The Honors thesis should be an outgrowth of the student’s academic work, rooted in their chosen discipline, in most cases in the student’s major or minor. In cases where a student has multiple majors, minors, or interdisciplinary interests that are not captured in a major or minor, the student should work with their Honors academic advisor to identify a topic that is supported by their academic work. The Honors thesis offers an opportunity - along with the responsibility - for a student to work with a faculty member on a research or creative project that integrates and expands on previous work. The Honors thesis will incorporate relevant, current research/previous work and demonstrate experience with design, execution, analysis, and presentation. An Honors thesis proposal must be submitted and approved by the faculty member advising the project and the Lewis Honors College (proposals and finished work submitted to your Honors academic advisor).

FOUR-YEAR PLAN

Below is a recommended schedule of tasks that will help a student plan for the successful completion of their Honors thesis. This schedule is focused on concrete action items; however students should keep in mind their academic, personal, and professional goals and work with their faculty and academic advisors to integrate them into their thesis plan.

FIRST YEAR

1. Acclimate to college, find extra-curriculars
2. Begin keeping thesis lists
   - Questions, topics, thoughts that are interesting, gathered from classwork, social interactions, office hours, etc.
   - Faculty you respect, have had supportive interactions with, or are well recommended
   - Assignments that were enjoyable to complete or incited a sense of pride

SOPHOMORE YEAR

1. Begin informational interviews with potential faculty advisors
2. Start to look into funding opportunities, summer plans, and research process (e.g., how to complete the IRB process and proposal, how to transfer internship skills and knowledge into thesis work, etc.)

JUNIOR YEAR

1. Narrow thesis options down to approximately three topics
2. Meet with your Honors academic advisor in the spring semester to review thesis ideas and review the proposal process
3. Meet with potential faculty advisor(s)
4. Complete initial research into potential thesis topics to evaluate if there is enough existing material to complete thesis, maybe several brief annotated bibliographies
5. Secure faculty advisor and any supplemental need (e.g., lab space, IRB approval, funding sources, external partnerships)
6. Start working on your Honors Thesis Proposal
   Due at end of third to last semester of coursework (typically May of junior year)
7. Meet with your faculty thesis advisor during proposal development
8. Continue to gather background information and preliminary data.
9. Gain faculty and Honors advisor’s approval of thesis proposal

SENIOR YEAR

1. Complete research/data collection/creative project
2. Complete data analysis/reflection, make recommendations, draw conclusions
3. Complete rough draft for review by faculty, have Honors advisor check for correct formatting
4. Complete your final Honors thesis written product and oral presentation
5. Turn in the written output and Honors Thesis Approval form to your advisor before the last week of classes in the semester you are graduating
6. Celebrate!! You did it!!
GENERAL INFORMATION

- At least eight scholarly sources are recommended to be submitted as a part of the Thesis Proposal.
- The Honors Thesis Proposal must be approved before the beginning of the first day of the Honors thesis course (HON 491 or equivalent). Students are encouraged to submit their Honors Thesis Proposal several weeks before the course starts. In some cases, your major may require you to turn complete your proposal even earlier.
- Regardless of major, a thesis proposal must be submitted to the Lewis Honors College in order to complete the Honors thesis requirement. This includes programs of study that require departmental theses as part of the degree.
- Be in contact with your Honors academic advisor for your major for more information on what your discipline considers an Honors Thesis.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

After successful completion of the Honors thesis a student will be able to:

1. Clearly identify a project goal and/or problem and articulate a subsequent research question/hypothesis or creative objective.
2. Discover and evaluate existing research/previous work relevant to a project of interest.
3. Formulate a plan to achieve desired research or creative goals, while identifying opportunities to make improvements throughout the process.
4. Recognize the importance of meeting established goals and/or deadlines.
5. Demonstrate a command of relevant scholarship/creativity and offer a rationale for the work’s contributions to a discipline in an appropriate manner in the form of a written and an oral component.