



**Southeastern Louisiana University  
Honors Program**

**Senior Thesis Handbook**



Revised Spring 2010

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[Adapted from Oklahoma State University Honors College]

# I. Overview of the Thesis Process

## Sophomore Year

- Talk with professors to learn their interests and research areas.
- Lay the groundwork for a potential thesis. Ask the professor or professors with whom you might be interested in working if they have suggestions for appropriate background reading in the discipline, ideas for undergraduate projects, opportunities to work with them in their studio, laboratory, etc. (If you find a professor and decide on a project, you may even be able to get started on the research phase of your thesis at this time.)

## Junior Year

- Secure a professor to act as your thesis advisor. Your advisor will direct your thesis project. Your advisor should be a professor in your major with whom you can work well. Depending upon the nature of your project, you may need to begin the research project quite early in your Junior year, especially if the project involves significant amounts of field work or laboratory work. (We find this especially true for theses in the sciences.) In all cases, the research phase of the thesis should begin no later than the second semester of your Junior year.
- Working with your thesis advisor, determine your thesis topic, what will be required to complete the project, and discuss the expectations that you both have for the project.
- Secure a Second Reader for your thesis. The Second Reader is another professor in your discipline who will read and sign-off on your thesis. The second reader may also help to direct the project. Your second reader should be selected in consultation with your thesis advisor.
- Begin the required reading and research as recommended by your thesis advisor.

## Senior Year

### Semester 1

- Complete your thesis research/creative endeavor. This work is often conducted as an H-option to an existing upper-level course. You should be working closely with your thesis advisor to ensure that you are on track and making progress.

### Semester 2

- Enroll in HONR 300.
- Write your thesis, again working carefully with your advisor and second reader to ensure that the paper is appropriate in terms of grammar, style, length, depth, and rigor.
- Schedule your thesis presentation.
- Submit full draft of your thesis to your advisor and second reader for feedback.
- Present your thesis.
- Submit final draft of your thesis to advisor and second reader for final approval.
- Submit approved final draft of your thesis to the Honors Director.
- **Graduate with your Honors diploma!**

## II. Writing a Thesis can be Rewarding (and Challenging)!



### ***What exactly is a thesis?***

The thesis process is an exciting time to delve deeply into the academic areas that interest you with the help of a knowledgeable professor. It can also be an intimidating, scary process. However, many Honors students point to the thesis as one of the most fulfilling experiences of their undergraduate careers. A thesis pairs Honors students with Southeastern Louisiana University faculty for an in-depth, independent research opportunity.

The thesis serves as the culmination of your interests and academic studies and presents an opportunity for focused study within your major. Your thesis serves as a successful conclusion to your undergraduate studies by contributing to your field of study.

### ***Why should I write one?***

Professors cannot really explore all of your interests in a class meeting 2-3 times a week with other students across a variety of majors. This is your chance to really explore something that fascinates you! It is not, however, just a really long research paper. You select the topic, you do most of the research independently, and you get to set the work schedule for your thesis. Along with honing your research and writing skills, the thesis process serves as a crash course in project management and independence. You will be taking your thesis from its inception as an idea through development and into a fully realized end product.

The commitment and skills learned through the thesis impress many graduate programs, professional schools, and prospective employers. Some graduate programs require a certain proficiency in research skills that are developed by undertaking the thesis process. Faculty members involved with a student's thesis often serve as excellent references for future education and employment.

And don't forget, a thesis is required for the Honors Diploma!

### ***So, what counts as a Thesis?***

There are many ways to approach this capstone to your Honors education. Most students

research a topic of interest in their majors and develop an independent paper on that topic. Other students utilize the “creative endeavor” option to fulfill their thesis requirement. For example, in the past, students have written creative fiction and analyzed and performed musical works.

The main focus should be on developing a thesis or project that represents original scholarly or creative work. The Honors Program will provide you with the support you need, but we also recognize that many times professors and those working in your field of study will be in the best position to determine and evaluate your thesis topic and final project.

***What length is required for my thesis?***

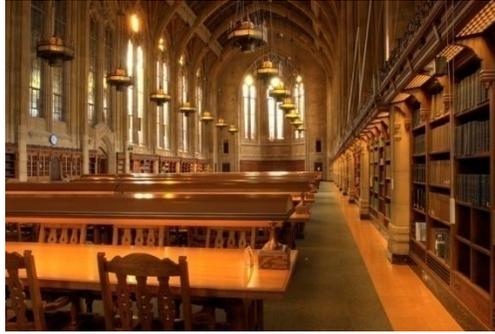
There are no formal requirements as to length of the honors thesis. Additionally, The Honors Program does not specify a thesis format (other than including the approval signature pages at the beginning). This is because length requirements and formats for the theses vary according to discipline. Your thesis advisor should be able to guide you in selecting the proper length and format for your field of study. The most important thing to remember is that your thesis represents a significant piece of independent research. Your thesis should be well written and should reflect the outcome of significant effort.

***When do I need to start thinking about my Thesis?***

Well, since you are reading this, I say start now! Usually, thesis work is inspired by classes, research, and interests that arise during your previous undergraduate career. As a general rule, many students begin thinking about a thesis during their junior year. The earlier you begin to think about your thesis, the more time you will have to explore various research topics.

Students in the Honors Program must enroll in a one-hour thesis course (HONR 300) the semester they intend to complete their thesis.

### III. The Thesis Process: Inception to Final Product



#### ***How do I choose my topic/director?***

##### ***Which do I choose first?***

In all honesty, students can pick either their topic or their director first. To some extent, you should know with which approach you are the most comfortable. If you have an idea as to your thesis topic, then you can choose a director with that area of study. If you have a favorite professor, but are less defined as to the topic, then ask them about thesis advising first.

##### ***I know my topic, how do I pick my thesis advisor?***

If you have a thesis focus area in mind, then search the hallowed halls to find a thesis advisor who can compliment your study. Realistically, this will take some research on your part – you don't really want to wander around your department aimlessly asking for a thesis advisor. Generally, students begin by searching the department's website for each faculty member's specialty areas. This is as easy as pulling up each professor's information and checking out their vita (the academy's word for resumé) for the areas in which they have studied and published. Talk with an academic advisor in the department. Take the time to have an informal chat with a couple of faculty members with whom you have worked well in the past. You may find one of them is a good candidate or they may be able to recommend a faculty member for whom your topic is better suited. It may take you a while to find the right thesis advisor, but don't be discouraged. You are learning about the breadth of your discipline and about each faculty member in the process. A few last words of encouragement – don't be afraid to knock on professors' doors; most of them do not bite.

##### ***I know which professor I would like to work with, but how do I pick my topic?***

If you have a professor in mind your next step is to talk with them about ideas for a topic. If your first choice does not have any ideas that you find exciting, you should certainly speak with other professors. Keep an open mind and enjoy talking with scholars in your field until you find a professor with interesting thesis ideas. Again, you will make a better impression if you have done a bit of research on each professor. Feel free to look up the last paper or two they authored. It never hurts to make a good impression and the articles will give you an idea of the specific interests of the faculty member.

***Who is on my thesis committee?***

Your thesis committee will consist of your thesis advisor, second reader, and the director of the Honors Program.

***How do I select my Second Reader?***

The second reader should be another professor in your discipline who can evaluate the quality of your work. Your second reader should be selected in consultation with your thesis advisor. In the case of an interdisciplinary thesis project, the second reader may be from a discipline different than that of your thesis advisor.

***Is there anything special I should know as I begin my thesis?***

Most honors theses do not require special permissions. However, please be aware that if your thesis involves human subjects, live animals, or hazardous materials you will need clearance from the IRB (Institutional Research Board). You should discuss this with your thesis advisor who usually has experience in securing the proper form of authorization.

## IV. Responsibilities



### A. Student Responsibilities

#### *What am I responsible for while I write my thesis?*

Well, beyond the obvious, **you agree to:**

- Turn in any required thesis forms on time (e.g., H-option forms, IRB release forms, etc.);
- Organize and schedule a meeting with your thesis advisor and second reader to discuss your project and any recommendations they might have;
- Attend and *be prepared* for regular meetings with your thesis advisor – if a meeting must be cancelled, provide plenty of notice. We recommend bi-weekly meetings;
- Secure, with the thesis advisor's assistance, any necessary special approval for the research;
- Keep all thesis committee members informed as to the progress of the thesis project;
- Inform the Director of the Honors Program if there are concerns with the process or indications that the thesis project is not on track for completion; and
- Participate in the Honors Thesis Presentations.

### B. Faculty Roles during the Thesis Semester

#### *What exactly does my thesis advisor do?*

The most important aspect of your thesis will be to communicate with your prospective thesis advisor regarding your commitment to your thesis and their commitment to your thesis.

**Ultimately, you have the responsibility for researching, writing, and compiling a timely and scholarly thesis. The independence required for a thesis is part of what separates the thesis from all other undergraduate work.**

**That said, the thesis advisor agrees to:**

- Work with the student to refine the student's interests into a suitable thesis project;
- Provide a clear expectation for the thesis/project, which addresses benchmarks, length, assessment, and other aspects of scholarship specific to the particular discipline;
- Help identify an appropriate thesis second reader;
- Meet with the student and second reader to work together to establish appropriate deadlines for drafts;
- Be prepared to meet with the student regularly (at least biweekly; more often as needed) throughout the thesis project;
- Inform the Director of the Honors Program if there appear to be indications that the thesis project is not on track for completion;
- Read and comment on drafts of the thesis as it develops; and
- Attend the student's Thesis Presentation.

### ***What does my Second Reader do?***

Your second reader generally has a working knowledge of your thesis area. The second reader can provide balance to your thesis by giving you guidance and another perspective. The second reader is expected to meet with the student and thesis advisor to establish appropriate deadlines for drafts and other "milestones" in the thesis project. The Honors Program asks the second reader to attend the public presentation.

Before you ask a faculty member to be your second reader, talk about your choice with your thesis advisor.

### ***What do I tell my second reader about their role in the thesis?***

For your thesis semester to run smoothly, it is best to let all faculty members involved in your thesis know what your thesis area is, how the thesis process works, and what their role will be throughout the semester. Your **second reader agrees to:**

- Provide the student guidance and information on their thesis when appropriate;
- Be available to meet with the student periodically during the semester;
- Attend an initial meeting with the Thesis advisor and the student to address expectations and deadlines;
- Read and comment on drafts of the thesis as they materialize;
- Participate in the student's public presentation.

## V. Campus Resources



### *Is there anything on campus that will make my life easier during my thesis semester?*

Of course, the Honors Program staff is always available to help in any way we can. Here are some resources available on campus that will help during your thesis semester.

#### **Honors Program Office**

- **Forms.** The H-option forms are available in the Honors Program office.
- **Thesis Master List.** The Honors Program keeps a master list of theses completed within the Program. You can find theses that have been completed in your area of interest.
- **Thesis Files.** In addition to the master list, the Honors Program also has full copies of the theses listed. Many students find looking at theses that have been completed in their areas an invaluable resource for ideas and insight on the thesis process.

#### **Library**

- **Interlibrary Loan.** This is a service that is available to all patrons of Sims Memorial Library. The Interlibrary Loan systems allow you to borrow books and get copies of articles that may not be housed within Southeastern's library system.
- **Subject Librarians.** Most subjects taught at Southeastern will have a subject librarian who is an invaluable resource to thesis students. Subject Area librarians will let you know the extent of the library's collection in your area and can help you find resources.

### **Southeastern Writing Center**

- **Individual Conferencing.** The Writing Center provides individual conferencing opportunities. During these conferences, users talk with trained writing consultants about their course papers, about useful strategies for generating ideas or for revising and editing their work, or about any number of other academic and personal writing needs.
- **Instructional Handouts.** The Center offers an extensive file of handouts; e.g., MLA Documentation, Generating Ideas for Writing, and Writing the Research Paper.
- **Other Writing Resources.** The Writing Center maintains a growing library of dictionaries, handbooks, documentation and style manuals, readers, periodicals, literature, and other writing resources for students to use.

## VI. Writing your Thesis



***I have my thesis topic. I have my thesis advisor and second reader. Now, how do I write a thesis?***

Well, truthfully, it's something you just sit down and write one page at a time. The most important thing you can do for yourself is to map out your thesis semester and keep to your schedule.

Keep in mind as you begin to map out your semester that you will need to give your thesis advisor several opportunities for input and revisions. In addition, we will schedule your presentation a few weeks before the end of the semester to give you an opportunity to address questions that arise during your defense and make necessary revisions. No one writes a thesis in one draft.

***Who is my audience for my thesis?***

You will want to discuss this with your thesis advisor, obviously. If you are planning on using your research for submission to a technical journal, or if your thesis advisor has strong feelings about your audience, a higher level of knowledge may be necessary. But, in general, you are writing to a well-educated audience, but not an audience who are experts in your field. You will figure this out as you discuss your thesis with your director, second reader, and even friends - one more reason to give yourself plenty of time to revise your thesis as necessary.

***What is the format of the thesis?***

The Honors Program does not specify a thesis format (other than including the approval signature page at the beginning). Formats for the theses vary according to discipline. Your thesis advisor should be able to guide you in selecting the proper format for your field of study.

***OK, so how long does my thesis need to be?***

Once again, there are no formal requirements as to length of the honors thesis. What is important is that the thesis represents a significant piece of work that is well written and well presented.

Again, keep in mind that this is the culmination of your undergraduate work and should represent significant time and effort. If you are intimidated by the thought of writing a long paper, think of the short papers that have been required of you over a semester. A seminar course may require 5 five-page papers. So, writing a twenty-five or thirty page thesis should not be unmanageable. In fact, many students find writing on a topic of their choosing to be very engaging and have a hard time editing their papers down to a manageable level. Your thesis advisor will give you their expectations when you have your first meeting with them.

***What does a typical thesis include?***

The Honors Program does not specify a thesis format, but in general, theses have a few components in common.

- Honors Program Title Page with appropriate signatures (required)
- Table of Contents (if appropriate)
- Text
- Endnotes (if appropriate)
- Bibliography/References
- Appendices (if any)
- IRB or other authorization (if required)

## VII. Tips for Sustained Writing Projects



[This section is reprinted from the Thesis Handbook of the University of Maine.]

### 1. Take careful notes

If you're planning to spend the first few months of your thesis work researching or collecting data, don't count on your memory to keep all that information handy when it comes time to write up your results and conclusions. Take careful notes: mark down all of the necessary information, including page numbers, author's name, the date you accessed a website, etc. If a brilliant idea comes to you that might be helpful during the writing process, *write it down*.

### 2. Make a writing plan

Not everyone uses outlines when they write, but for longer papers, some kind of sketch of the overall layout of your paper can save you time in the revision process—remember, it's much easier to restructure an outline than an entire 60-page paper. Outlines can also provide momentum for your writing; once you complete an item on your outline, you'll already know what to work on next. Outlines do not need to be formal or very detailed to be effective. (Be sure to consult your thesis advisor on this, too!)

### 3. Start anywhere, anytime

Even though your readers will start at the introduction, who says the writer has to? If you are struggling to get that first sentence of your introduction written, try starting somewhere else in your paper, where you feel the most confident about what you have to say. (This is where your outline comes in handy.) You also don't need to wait until you've read every single book in the library on your subject before you start writing—if you have enough information for a paragraph, why not get started on it now? You can always add new ideas later on. Just make sure that you revise your complete draft to make sure all of the pieces you've written transition into one another, so your writing is smooth and seamless from start to finish.

### 4. Talk about your project

Drive your committee, friends, family members, pets, professors, classmates, and anyone else you meet crazy by discussing your writing with them. The more you explain your project to others, the clearer it will be for you, and the easier it will be to write about. **Meet with your thesis advisor regularly during the writing process** to talk about passages you've written; you may not realize your errors until you've had the opportunity

to really talk about your writing with a critical audience. Some students even read their writing out loud to themselves to catch any missing words or awkwardness during the proofreading stage.

### **5. Don't let writer's block shut you down**

We all get it, and it can be difficult to overcome, but you should never let writer's block derail you for long. There are a variety of causes for writer's block, ranging from boredom to anxiety, and there are different strategies for each cause. (Note that writer's block and procrastination are not the same thing!) First, think about why you're having trouble: are you setting your standards too high to get something on paper, or are you simply bored with your thesis? If you are having trouble getting started, here are a few things you can do to get you ~~unstuck~~":

- Freewriting: this means turning off your internal editor and just writing whatever comes to your mind, even if it's ridiculous; sometimes writers block themselves by having an overactive internal editor—don't expect yourself to choose the perfect word or phrase every time you write. Just worry about getting your point across first, and then go back and polish it later.
- Talking: if you're unsure of the direction your project is taking, talk to your thesis director or someone who can help you find footing to get started.
- Start somewhere else: find yourself struggling to write section 2 because you keep thinking about what needs to happen in section 3? Write section 3 first!
- Get organized: This can mean two things; if you haven't planned a clear outline, you may need to write one (or develop the one you have) to give yourself a better picture of what your prose should discuss. The second organization problem may be outside your writing—if you keep checking email, chatting with friends, answering your cell phone, watching TV, or singing to music, you probably are setting yourself up for some serious interference. Create an environment that allows you to focus without stress-inducing interruptions. (Note: this does not mean redecorating your entire living space to make it feng shui—that's called procrastination!)

### **6. Don't let procrastination prevent your success**

If you're a procrastinator when it comes to writing, relax: you're normal. But that doesn't mean you shouldn't try to overcome the tendency to procrastinate when there is a deadline to meet. Long-term projects can be especially dangerous for procrastinators, since the illusion of ~~lots of time~~" can fool you. To avoid that awful day when you realize that your 80-page paper is due in a week, and you haven't even started it yet, start scheduling appointments with your writing project. Figure out what time of day you work best: in the morning after your first cup of coffee? At 1:00 am when your roommate is asleep? The two hours before dinner? Once you've identified your peak productivity time, make the effort to keep that block of time free of other activities so you can work regularly—when it becomes a habit, you'll be less likely to procrastinate. Also, be honest with yourself; procrastinators are really good at rationalization—be willing to identify the difference between real excuses (~~I can't write when I have to go to class~~") and procrastination excuses (~~I can't write when it's sunny outside~~"). Once you've done what you can to motivate yourself, tell your friends and family about your goals. If you

have a friend who often says, “Come on, you can work on it *after* we go to the movies,” you may want to tell them about how important your project is and how susceptible you are to distractions. You may find that your friends will encourage you to keep going once they understand your challenge. (Even if they still try to distract you, it’s a good idea to learn how to say no.) Although you clearly can’t spend all of your time writing, don’t let distractions prevent you from even getting started.

### **7. Keep going!**

The writing process can stall or become stale if you don’t work at it consistently. Plan regular writing sessions so that you don’t waste time trying to regroup each time you return to your project. If you work at your writing project consistently, you should resist the urge to reread everything that you had written previously before writing something new; as long as you catch any inconsistencies or transition problems in the revision process, pushing forward every time you sit down to write will save you time and keep you on schedule. You should also try to fight the urge to do research during the writing phase; if you come to the point in a paragraph where you think you’ll need to do some further reading, make a note to explore that problem later and press on. Think of how long it would take to write if you stopped to read or look up words every few sentences!

### **8. Budget time for final revision**

Very few writers (even professional writers) get it right on the first pass, especially in a long-term project. Always leave plenty of time for you to discuss a complete first draft with your thesis advisor and to make any necessary revisions. Revision doesn’t just include proofreading; it could also mean adding or deleting entire sections of your paper, so be sure to prevent some serious stress by giving yourself plenty of time for major revisions.

### **9. Get a writer’s guide and use it**

Something about academic writing makes writers forget everything they learned about grammar, style, and documentation. Make sure your writing is professional and polished by looking up the correct way to document sources, punctuate quotations, or use words. To prevent interruptions to your writing momentum, highlight areas that you aren’t sure you’ve written correctly and check them after you’ve finished writing that particular passage. Better yet, brush up on your documentation format (APA, MLA, etc.) before you start writing.

### **10. Save your work in three different places (paranoia can be a good thing)**

You finish your final draft, you are just about to click “Print,” when your computer crashes. In addition to saving your file to a hard drive, create occasional backup files saved off your computer (on a travel drive or burned to a CD, for instance) and print hard copies every once in a while. To be extra safe, keep some version of your thesis in a completely different location from your computer; in the unlikely (but always possible) instance that fire or other disaster occurs, you’ll still have a backup file available. As you revise and make major changes, always save new versions of your work as separate files—don’t totally replace older versions, just in case you decide to switch back or borrow passages from previous edits.

## VIII. Conducting your Thesis Presentation



### ***What is required at my thesis presentation?***

You will be allotted 20-25 minutes to present a summary of your research or creative endeavor in front of your thesis advisor, second reader, Honors Program staff, and other interested faculty and students. After your presentation, the audience will have an opportunity to ask questions about your thesis project. You will ‘defend’ your thesis by showing how your methods, research, and findings adequately address their questions.

### ***How do I schedule my thesis presentation?***

The Honors Director will determine a window of time for each semester’s presentations. Talk with your thesis advisor and second reader to find a date and time within this window for your thesis presentation. Faculty calendars generally fill up and become more difficult to coordinate as the semester wears on, so you will want to choose the date and time of your presentation early in the semester before their calendars have filled.

### ***How can I prepare for my presentation?***

One of the best ways to get ready is to do a trial run! Schedule an informal time and place with your friends and family and present your findings to them. This will give you a sense of timing for your thesis presentation and build your confidence. Also, Sims Memorial Library has “Presentation Rooms” available in which you may practice.

Another idea is to think about which of your professors was the most effective at communicating information in your classes. You might try to emulate this professor and even ask if you can sit down and talk with them to get tips for presentation. I guarantee they will be flattered!

### ***What else needs to be done before the presentation?***

You should confirm that any equipment (overhead or computer projectors, screens, computers) that you need are available for the defense. You can check with the Honors Director or Honors staff to be sure that any equipment you might need will be ready.

### ***Can I invite other people to the presentation?***

Yes, thesis presentations are considered a public forum. If you wish to have friends or family attend your defense, you are welcome to do so. As with any public presentation, think about how observers affect the experiment and what sensitivity, if any, they may have to your presentation. You may also want to talk this over with your advisor.

### ***I'm excited, but anxious. What happens at the presentation?***

A thesis defense is designed to last approximately 30 minutes. Typically, the first 20 minutes is devoted to your thesis work. Usually you will present a summary of your thesis, after which your thesis advisor, second reader, and the audience will engage you in a question and answer session. During this discussion, as well as after the presentation, suggestions for revisions may be made. The presentation is sometimes done simply as a "talk," but it may also involve a computer (PowerPoint) presentation or some other form. This is something you should talk over with your thesis advisor.

### ***How should I conduct the presentation?***

This is a good thing for you to talk over with your thesis advisor. A few questions to think about:

- Do you want your advisor to introduce you?
- Do you want to take questions during your presentation or wait until it's over? (Don't forget to tell your audience what you have decided!)

### ***What are some "tips" for a successful presentation?***

Every thesis committee and presentation is different. However, here are some ideas that you might want to consider:

- Many students use PowerPoint to present their thesis. It's not a requirement, but you might want to consider it.
- Regardless of what method you choose for presentation, practice! In many cases, your advisor would be glad to sit down with you and listen to your presentation, providing some suggestions. You might also try it out on friends and fellow thesis-writers.
- Think about how you will be most comfortable in the thesis presentation.

## IX. Revisions and Final Submission



### ***What is this about revisions? I'm not done?***

Done? A thesis is never done! Just kidding, but in almost every thesis some amount of revision work before submitting the final version is required. In the vast majority of cases, this is nothing more than minor, word processing changes. In a small number of situations, it might entail more serious changes and revisions.

### ***How long do I have to get my final revisions in?***

After making the revisions, if any, after your thesis defense, submit a final copy of your thesis to your advisor and second reader by the deadline established for that semester (see the HONR 300 syllabus and/or Deadlines page). Remind them that each of them will need to sign the Honors Thesis Cover Sheet.

Once your thesis advisor and second reader have signed the cover sheet, submit the final draft, with signed cover sheet, to the Director of the Honors Program in 103 Meade Hall. Your signed thesis must be submitted to the Honors Director no later than the last day of classes for the given semester (i.e., before final exams).

The Director of the Honors Program will transmit the information to the Registrar where the appropriate Honors award will be recorded on your diploma and transcript.

## **X. The Home Stretch...**

### ***What, exactly, do I need turn in to the Honors Program at the end of the semester?***

You MUST turn in a copy of your thesis or creative endeavor and the approval page with the appropriate signatures. All honors theses are on file in the Honors Program office and are open to students.

If you have completed your thesis as part of an H-option, be sure to submit the signed H-option form to the Honors Office along with your thesis.

### ***What is the Honors Thesis Cover Sheet?***

In addition to the text, the thesis copy filed with the Honors Program must include an Honors Thesis Cover Sheet, which contains original signatures of the thesis advisor and second reader. These pages will also act as the title page for the thesis.

### ***What about my grade?***

The Director of the Honors Program is the instructor of record for HONR 300 and assigns the final grade as according to the criteria set forth in the course syllabus.

### **And you're DONE!!!**

You have just completed your Honors Senior Thesis!

### ***But wait, there's more!***

Didn't we just say you were done? Well, yes and no. You are done with your Senior Thesis. However, you still have to decide how to best use and share your work.

Often the work you have done is appropriate for dissemination to a larger audience. You should talk with your thesis advisor about options for publishing your paper in an appropriate journal or presenting the results at a professional conference.

In many disciplines, applications for graduate schools require a writing sample. A portion of your thesis may be appropriate for this as well. If you are considering applying to graduate school in such a discipline, you should discuss with your thesis advisor how best to use your thesis (or a portion thereof) as a writing sample.

*We hope the information in this handbook will make your thesis semesters manageable and productive. Your thesis is your chance to really explore your interests and make a contribution to your academic field. We know you will write a wonderful thesis. YOU CAN DO IT!!*

## Appendix I – Research and Writing Process Checklist

[Adapted from the University of Texas, Austin]

\_\_\_ Discuss your proposal with your thesis advisor. Make necessary revisions to the scope and focus.

\_\_\_ Complete H-Option form (if required) for your research work.

\_\_\_ Work out a written schedule with your thesis advisor for each of the following benchmarks.

- Selection of second reader
- Research prospectus and bibliography (if required by your advisor)
- Completion of bulk of research and reading
- Submission of detailed outline and first draft of introduction
- Submissions of first draft of each chapter or section
- Submission of completed first draft
- Submission of final draft for last reading and faculty signatures

\_\_\_ Follow the schedule you have set with your advisor and second reader. Make mutually agreeable revisions to the scheduled deadlines only if necessary. Avoid procrastination!

\_\_\_ Complete your thesis presentation.

\_\_\_ Submit final, signed copies of your thesis to the Honors Program Office with completed H-option form (if used).

**Appendix II – Sample Thesis Cover Sheet**

**YOUR THESIS TITLE**

A Thesis  
presented to  
the Honors Program of  
Southeastern Louisiana University

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the

Honors Diploma

By

**YOUR NAME HERE**

Dr. **ADVISOR'S NAME HERE**, Thesis Supervisor

**Month Year**

The undersigned, appointed by the Director of the Honors Program, have examined the thesis

**YOUR TITLE HERE**

presented by

**YOUR NAME HERE**

a candidate for the Honors Diploma and hereby certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

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Thesis Supervisor

Type Advisor Name here.

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Second Reader

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