

UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM
THESIS HANDBOOK

01.12.26

Students in the University Honors Program may choose to graduate with an Honors Thesis. The Honors Thesis is an opportunity for students to pursue a topic of their choice in the form of an independent research or creative project under close guidance from a faculty advisor. Designing an original project, carrying it through conception to completion and presentation, advancing the state of knowledge in your field, and working closely with a mentor is one of the most fulfilling experiences of academic life. It is excellent preparation for graduate work and meeting the demands of contemporary life, both as a producer and user of knowledge.

What is an Honors Thesis?

An Honors Thesis is piece of written/creative (or a combination of both) work that presents the outcome of in-depth, original research in a particular topic under faculty guidance. It may be in the student's major or combine majors and minors and is an opportunity to pursue a topic unique to your interests. We encourage you to work in collaborative, interdisciplinary teams of two (and no more than three) students to create your thesis project. You may also have one or two faculty co-advisors. The thesis can be successfully completed in two to three semesters as part of a normal undergraduate course load.

What if I am a major in the Performing or Creative Arts?

Students in majors such as music, art, theater, cinema, photography or English may have as a basis of their thesis a work in a creative medium. Although such a project can form the basis of a thesis, it is not a thesis in and of itself. To be acceptable as a thesis, a creative work must be accompanied by a written explanation of the work and its cultural and historical context which includes (but is not limited to) an evaluation of the performance/exhibition/story, etc., addressing such questions:

- Why you took the approach you did?
- Why you selected the particular work or works to be performed?
- What would you do differently the next time?

Final submissions of a creative thesis must include an appropriate hard copy record of the project, such as a portfolio, audio, video, or manuscript.

How long should the Thesis be?

There is no standard length for the thesis. This is determined by what is appropriate for the particular subject. Length is not the real test of a thesis, but rather adequately and appropriately answering the research question.

How do I begin?

Some students already know the focus of their thesis based on previous research experience. Other students may not have a topic but a particular professor in mind with whom they would like to work. Either way, begin by selecting your topic and advisor/s.

Selecting a Topic

Choose a research question/creative exploration that you care about deeply; one that fires up your imagination and curiosity. Nothing will hamper your progress more than a topic that does not interest you. Thesis areas can include something learned in an earlier course or something you have read or researched. Collaborative projects (involving students from the same or other majors) of an interdisciplinary nature are strongly encouraged. Consult faculty members of relevant departments to secure an advisor or co-advisors in the case of an interdisciplinary project. It is recommended that the UHP receive the Thesis Proposal by the end of the junior year.

Role of the Advisor

The thesis advisor must be a full-time faculty member or hold affiliated faculty status. The faculty advisor will guide, support and encourage students throughout the thesis process. The student should meet with the advisor on a regular basis. The advisor reads drafts of the thesis, monitors the student's progress, and provides feedback. The thesis advisor will then enter a grade for UHON 499 at the completion of the thesis.

Thesis Proposal

The student must discuss their thesis proposal with the faculty advisor **prior to the semester** in which they plan to take it. [UHON 499 form](#) - Application for Thesis must be submitted to honors@siu.edu or the front desk by the **Friday of the first week of classes**.

Once the proposal is approved, the student is provided a section number and CRN which allows them to register for UHON 499-Honors Thesis.

Note: Students who are not required to complete a capstone project or thesis within their discipline and wish to count a departmental 499 as their Honors thesis may do so. Students are still required to get approval from the Honors Director by submitting their thesis proposal and filling out Form UHON 499A- Application for Departmental Senior Thesis/Project. However, instead of listing UHON 499 as the course, students will write in the appropriate rubric (i.e. PSYC 499, HIST 499, etc.)

Proposal Guidelines

The University Honors thesis project involves substantive, in-depth study/creative activity under close supervision of a faculty mentor. There is no specific required format or length for your Honors project, however, likely options are a formal research paper (e.g. a thesis) or a creative activity/production (e.g., a work/works of fine or performing art; a media production; literary, musical or dramatic composition/s). You will negotiate the specific format and expectations of this project with your faculty advisor. However, one common feature of all Honors projects is that they must involve some form of public presentation appropriate to your discipline (e.g., to peers in your discipline or the Honors program, to a class, at a conference, as a recital or opening).

As the first step to beginning your Honors project, you should submit this **Thesis Proposal**, signed and approved by your faculty advisor to the Honors Program Director, preferably by the end of your junior year and no later than the Fall of your senior year. The proposal should be approximately 750-1250 words (3-5 double spaced pages) and must cover the following areas:

1. Project Title – List a preliminary title for your project (this may be tentative at the proposal stage and can be refined when you finish the project).
2. Project Overview and Goals – Provide a brief description of the project you are proposing, the research questions you are exploring (if appropriate), and the desired outcomes of your work. This overview should be written in clear language accessible to readers outside of your discipline.
3. Methods and Time Line – Explain the methods/techniques you will use in completing this project, as well as the specific steps and anticipated time line for your efforts.
4. Resources/Literature – Describe the literature you will consult in completing this project or the resources you will be drawing upon as inspiration for your work.
5. Description of Final Project – Explain the format of your final project, how you will present it and to whom. (e.g. conference, departmental colloquium, exhibit, performance, etc.)
6. Significance and Contribution – Describe the significance of your project and the contribution it will make to your field.
7. Difference between your Project and the Capstone Project in your Discipline – If your major requires a final, senior or capstone project, explain how your proposed honors project differs from this already required experience.
8. Signature of Student and Faculty Advisor/Mentor – Your honors project proposal is like a contract between you and your faculty advisor/mentor. The last page of the proposal should be signed and dated by both you and your advisor/mentor and then submitted for approval to the Honors Program Director by the end of your junior year.

The thesis proposal should be attached to the UHON 499 Thesis form.

Guidelines for the thesis

All theses must have the following elements in the order below:

1. Cover Page (see format in back)
2. Acknowledgements and a Biographical note of the author. Both are on one page. The Bio note should be written in third person.
3. Table of contents (optional)
4. Thesis
5. Citations and bibliography. Students may use whatever forms of bibliographic and footnote/endnote citation is required by their discipline.
6. Appendix—if necessary

Formatting guidelines

Use the same format throughout your thesis. The main text should use a 12 point font size. The body of the thesis should be double spaced. Single spacing may be used for quotes and in your bibliography/references.

Turning in your thesis

- Your faculty member will grade and approve your thesis.
- Submit a hard copy of your thesis to your UHP mentor along with the *Thesis Faculty Confirmation* form (see Form in the back and also on the Honors webpage). Must be submitted no later than the Wednesday of exam week of the semester you are registered for the thesis. Extensions and/or incompletes must be approved by the Director.
- After approval from your Honors mentor, you must turn in the thesis to **Open SIUC**.

Open SIUC

OpenSIUC is an institutional repository that stores, preserves, manages and makes publicly available the research produced at SIUC. All Honors theses must be submitted to Open SIUC unless authors request an embargo of six or twelve months or request a waiver from this requirement. Requests for embargos or waivers must be sent in writing to the UHP Director.

To submit your thesis to Open SIUC:

- Create an account at <http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu>
- Go to http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/uhp_theses
- Click on “Submit Research”
- Fill out the form
- Upload your file
- Click submit
- Email your UHP mentor when completed

Documentation

The thesis must be the student's own work, as to take data, knowledge, interpretations, or phraseology from another without full acknowledgement is common theft and a punishable act of plagiarism. All ideas and data that are not common knowledge must be cited appropriately.

Public Presentation of Thesis Research

An important part of engaging in scholarly and creative activity is sharing it with others. In addition to completing the Honors thesis, all students are required to present their thesis research to faculty, and/or students. The presentation, which may be in a form appropriate to the student's discipline, typically lasts 15-20 minutes and can be done in any academic setting. Set aside another 20-30 minutes for questions from the audience. Students may present in one of their classes, a department meeting, a conference, an academic student organization, or Undergraduate Research Day. Please make sure to inform the Honors Program of the time and venue of this presentation two weeks in advance so that it can be publicized.

Cover Page (The following information must be centered on the cover page)

THESIS TITLE

Student Name

A thesis submitted to the University Honors Program
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Honors Certificate with Thesis

Approved by

Name of Faculty Advisor

Rank and Department

Southern Illinois University, Carbondale

Date



UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM

APPLICATION FOR SENIOR HONORS THESIS OR PROJECT: _____

Course number

Date: _____

Name: _____

Dawgtag: _____

SIUC Address: _____

Phone: _____

Major: _____ Application is for 3 semester credit hours

Semester in which you plan to register for this work:

Fall _____ Spring _____ Summer _____ 20 _____

Working title of thesis or project:

*Attach thesis proposal to this sheet *

Signature of Student

Date

Signature of Thesis Director

Date

Printed Name of Thesis Director

Thesis Director Dawgtag

Rank and Department of Thesis Director

Signature of Director- University Honors Program

Date

* Student must submit a final copy of the thesis to the University Honors Program in order to receive a grade and credit toward the Honors graduation option.

Revised 01/12/2026

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

Added to database: _____ Written in excel sheet: _____ Written in file: _____

Overrides in Banner: _____ Student Contacted with CRN: _____ Degreeworks: _____

*If thesis is cancelled, undo previous steps



Southern Illinois University
CARBONDALE

UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM

FACULTY VERIFICATION OF THE COMPLETION OF THE UHON 499 THESIS

To be turned in with the Thesis.

By signing below, I certify that my Honors Thesis advisee has completed all requirements of the UHON 499 Honors Thesis.

Printed Name of Thesis Advisor

Dawgtag

Signature of Thesis Advisor

Date

Revised 09/12/2025

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

Added to Student File with Thesis: _____