

# **HONORS THESIS HANDBOOK**

**For all Honors students who intend to graduate with Highest Honors**

.

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## **Introduction**

This Handbook is for all Honors students, including HAL majors, who intend to graduate with Highest Honors. In order to do so, you must complete a thesis by taking HONS 3300 and 4300 (HAL majors will take these courses with Dr. Brink; non-HAL majors will take them with Dr. Williams). This Handbook is designed to assist you throughout the preparation and completion of your thesis. It contains pertinent information that will allow you to move through the process smoothly and help you produce a thesis that meets Honors College expectations and requirements. Using this information in the researching, writing, and formatting of your thesis will ensure that the finished product reflects your commitment and hard work.

The Honors College faculty and staff are dedicated to assisting you as you make the commitment to fulfill all Highest Honors criteria. HAL thesis should direct questions to Dr. Brink; non-HAL thesis students should direct their questions to Dr. Williams. Please do not hesitate to come to us with questions about any part of this Handbook, the thesis itself, or the thesis completion process.

## **Honors Thesis Program Contact Information**

### HONS 3300/4300 Instructors

HAL Majors:  
Dr. James Brink  
McClellan 213  
834-4443  
[jim.brink@ttu.edu](mailto:jim.brink@ttu.edu)

Non-HAL Majors:  
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McClellan 212  
834-6003  
[keira.williams@ttu.edu](mailto:keira.williams@ttu.edu)

Thesis Coordinator  
Ms. Cheyenne Belew  
McClellan Hall 102  
806-834-2529  
[Cheyenne.belew@ttu.edu](mailto:Cheyenne.belew@ttu.edu)

Honors College Main Office  
McClellan Hall 103  
742-1828  
8:00 am-5:00 pm, M-F

## **Responsible Conduct of Research and Scholarship**

### **Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) and Scholarship**

**No research can be conducted prior to receiving IRB/IACUC approval for those projects that require it.**

The following information applies primarily to STEM majors; humanities research is generally exempt from these requirements. If you have questions about whether or not your research project requires additional training or institutional approval, talk to your HONS 3300 instructor and your thesis director.

As part of Texas Tech's commitment to integrity, ethics, and safety, Honors Thesis candidates will be required to attend training in the Responsible Conduct of Research and Scholarship in your discipline and in your specific area of research. This may include specialized training or attendance at workshops specific to the research or general lab safety. If your faculty director's research is funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF), then you may be required to attend additional training to satisfy NSF requirements.

It will also be necessary to gain Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval if using human subjects or Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) approval if working with animals. A copy of the IRB/IACUC approval form must be included in the Honors thesis as an appendix. For more information about IRB, please go to the Human Research Protection Program website, [www.depts.ttu.edu/vpr/irb/index.php](http://www.depts.ttu.edu/vpr/irb/index.php). For additional information and instructions about IACUC please go their website at [www.depts.ttu.edu/iacuc](http://www.depts.ttu.edu/iacuc).

It is imperative that you discuss IRB/IACUC approval with your faculty director early in the thesis process even if you do not believe you need the approval. Securing this approval can take some time, so it is best to start the application process early. Moreover, it may be necessary to have this approval if you want to use the research in the future, particularly as part of a graduate project or publication. Texas Tech University and the Honors College are interested in protecting students, so we err on the side of caution in these matters.

If you are continuing research already in progress, it may be possible to utilize an IRB or IACUC approval that is already in place.

## **Procedures for Lab Safety**

1. Complete the online Safety Awareness course from Texas Tech University Environmental Health and Safety department (<http://www.depts.ttu.edu/ehs/Web/>).
2. Complete the online Lab Safety course from Texas Tech University Environmental Health and Safety department (<http://www.depts.ttu.edu/ehs/Web/TrainModDesc.aspx>).
3. Complete any additional online courses that are relevant to your research from Texas Tech University Environmental Health and Safety department.

## **Procedures for Responsible Conduct of Research and Scholarship**

It is the mission of the Honors College to provide a safe space for Honors Thesis students to report and discuss their concerns regarding the safe and ethical conduct of research and scholarship. If you have a concern, please do not hesitate to bring it to the attention of the Honors Thesis Instructor, the Undergraduate Research Coordinator, or the Associate Dean of the Honors College. We strive to provide a safe, secure environment where integrity and ethics are the cornerstones of research and scholarship.

Procedures for Honors thesis students to report unsafe practices or misconduct in research and scholarship:

1. Take written notes of the incidents, including dates, times, and the exact circumstances of the misconduct or unsafe procedures.
2. Bring this information to your Honors Thesis Instructor.
3. If necessary, schedule a meeting with your Honors Thesis Instructor to discuss your concerns.
4. Know that the Honors Thesis Instructor will protect your confidentiality and will handle the reporting of the alleged misconduct to the appropriate University authorities.

## Honors Thesis Formatting Guidelines

Careful thesis manuscript preparation is important because it reflects the quality of your work, which can be accessed electronically by the public through the library's website (Honors theses are digitized with access available through the TTU University Library). You must be consistent with citations in the presentation of your scholarship. Other readers in your field, as well as anyone interested in your project, must be able to access what you bring to the scholarly conversation, and be able to access information that exists about your subject matter. So make your manuscript reader-friendly, regularized and appealing.

### Documentation Style

Honors theses should be written according to the citation and style format appropriate to each academic field. If you are writing your thesis to submit for publication by a specific journal, you should follow that journal's guidelines and provide them to both your Thesis Director and your HONS 3300/4300 Instructor.

Honors thesis students may not use online bibliography tools like BibMe, EasyBib, etc., to format their citations. These sites are unreliable and inevitably result in error-ridden theses.

For style and documentation, **students should consistently follow the most recent edition of the manual of style accepted in their discipline.** Some of the most commonly used style manuals are:

Lunsford, *The St. Martin's Handbook* (highly recommended—*St. Martin's* includes guides to each of the following manuals)

*MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*

*Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA)*

*Scientific Style and Format: The CSE Manual*

*The Chicago Manual of Style*

Additionally, Purdue University's Online Writing Center (OWL) is a great resource with quick links to most commonly used documentation styles:

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/>

Many of you will be writing Honors theses that are meant to mirror scientific journal articles. In these cases, the Honors College asks that you include a brief Introduction and Conclusion written for and accessible to the lay audience. Your Honors Thesis Instructor will work closely with you on how to write these sections.

Some of you will be writing your Honors theses for submission to specific journals in your fields. In these cases, you need to furnish your Honors Thesis Instructor with the formatting instructions and guidelines provided by that journal. Most journals have sections detailing guidelines for potential authors on their websites.

If you are unsure of the documentation style that you should be using for your Honors thesis, speak with your Thesis Director to determine which style is appropriate to your field and for

your thesis project. You may also discuss documentation style with your Honors Thesis Instructor at any time during the process.

Note: It is important to determine the proper documentation style at the outset of your thesis project, and you should use it in every draft. Do not wait until the final draft to “fix” your citations. Format your citations properly from the beginning. Additionally, it is advisable to “overcite” in early drafts, meaning that you should cite every single bit of information that you think needs a citation. It is much easier to include this information in early drafts than it is to look it up later. Your HONS 4300 Instructor will help you remove superfluous and repetitive citations in later drafts.

### **Manuscript Organization**

Broadly speaking, there are two different types of organization for Honors theses: one for theses in the humanities, and one for those in the sciences. Please use the descriptions below as general organizational guidelines; as you draft your thesis, your organization is likely to change in response to feedback from your Thesis Director and your HONS 3300/4300 Instructor.

#### **Theses in the Sciences:**

- Title Page
- Abstract
- Acknowledgements (optional)
- Table of Contents
- List of Illustrations/List of Tables/List of Figures (when needed)
- Introduction
  - Definition and background of the thesis topic, statement of research question and argument
- Literature Review
  - Work-by-work review of every relevant scholarly article, book, and/or unpublished study
- Methods
  - Detailed, chronological description of every method and instrument employed in this study
- Results
  - Detailed analysis of the results of this study
- Discussion
  - Detailed discussion of the results, including explanations for each result, a detailed comparison of your results to those of other relevant studies, and a discussion of the limitations of your study
- Conclusions
  - Reiteration of your argument and the significance of this study to the field
  - Suggestions for future research
- Appendices
  - As you draft your thesis, you will discuss appropriate appendices with your Honors Thesis Instructor; these generally include things like consent forms, large



data charts or graphs, and photographs or images that were too large or awkward to go in the text of your thesis.

- Works Cited
  - Includes all works cited

### **Theses in the Humanities:**

- Title Page
- Abstract
- Acknowledgements (optional)
- Table of Contents
- List of Illustrations/List of Tables/List of Figures (when needed)
- Introduction
  - Introduction of the topic of the thesis project and its background (how and why you are writing on this topic, etc.)
  - Thesis (statement of position, arguments, hypothesis)
  - Statement of research methodology (when needed)
  - Statement and definition of relevant theoretical paradigms
  - Literature Review (situate your work within the context of existing published scholarship—this section might be embedded in the body of your thesis in the final draft, but it is advisable to write it first as a separate section)
- Body of Thesis
  - Analytical discussion
    - Presentation and discussion of results (if you conducted a specific study or experiment)
    - Lengthy discussion of integration of your secondary research (the existing scholarly works that you used to formulate your ideas) and your primary research (the additional research you did to build your argument, which includes things like archival research, media and online sources, interviews, etc.)
    - Comparison of your results to those of other relevant works in the field
- Conclusion
  - Reiteration of your argument and the significance of this study to the field
  - Implications of study, with a discussion of possible limitations and suggestions for further research
- Appendices (optional)
- Works Cited

### **Formatting:**

Your Honors theses should conform to the TTU Graduate School's formatting guidelines, available here: <https://www.depts.ttu.edu/gradschool/docs/format/FormattingManual.pdf>.

The exception to this rule is your title page, which will look slightly different from the template provided in the Graduate School's guidelines. See "Sample Pages" for the Honors thesis title page template.

- **IMPORTANT:** When submitting the penultimate electronic copy (MS Word) of your finished, formatted thesis to the Thesis Coordinator, you will include the title page *without* signatures. The Library Archive will not accept signed title pages in an effort to protect students from identity theft.
- Format the Works Cited section according to the style guide for your discipline

### **Additional Help**

If you have more questions, please contact any of these resources and utilize the TTU Graduate School website.

1. Thesis Director and faculty Reviewer;
2. Honors College Thesis Coordinator;
3. Honors College Associate Dean for Students;
4. Check the Graduate School website (<http://www.depts.ttu.edu/gradschool/students/current/THDGuidelines.php>) for helpful information that the TTU Graduate School provides to students completing theses and dissertations.

### **Dual Degrees**

If you are receiving dual degrees, remember that your transcript notation of Highest Honors will accompany only the major associated with the thesis.

## Revising

You will receive detailed feedback on your writing from your Thesis Instructor and from your Thesis Director, but you should learn to proofread and revise on your own following these basic tips.

1. Read the sentences and look for several long sentences one after the other – break up some of these thoughts to make the text easier to read and comprehend.
2. Look for repetitive information – check to make sure that sentences serve a purpose. Sentences may be amplifying, supporting, or evidentiary. Break these sentences up to avoid overwriting.
3. Read out loud to identify clunky wording, syntax problems, or other issues.
4. Interrogate each paragraph: identify the topic sentence and supportive and evidentiary sentences in each. Does each sentence serve its purpose? Do they each inform, explain, evaluate, or persuade?
5. Tighten generalizations – write everything you can imagine in the first draft. Begin to delete information in the subsequent drafts.
6. Think of the reader, who may or may not be an expert on the topic. In your Introduction and Conclusions, try to write for the lay reader.
7. As you write your chapters, make sure you are weaving the argument throughout each chapter/section.
8. Check for a logical progression, linking each previous paragraph/section/chapter to the next. Make clear transitions between paragraphs, topics, and sections.
9. Use an introductory paragraph in each chapter to orient the reader to the point of that chapter, and be clear about how it fits with the previous chapters/argument.
10. Use active voice over passive voice as much as possible.
11. Use concrete nouns. Do not use adjectives, such as “this” or “that,” as subjects of a sentence. Always include the noun.  
Incorrect: This is unproven. Correct: This theory is unproven.
12. Do not trust the word processing spell checker. In MS Word, add technical words to the dictionary so that it is easier to use the red underline as a clue that a word is misspelled.
13. Do not proofread and edit a section or chapter immediately after writing it. Problems are easier to spot if there is time between when the text was written and when you begin proofing.

## **Revision Checklist**

1. Does the sentence/paragraph/section have a clear and concise main idea? Is this idea made clear to the reader in a thesis statement or topic sentence?
2. Is there a specific purpose (such as to inform, entertain, evaluate, or persuade)? Have you made this purpose clear to the reader?
3. Does the introduction create interest in the topic and make your audience want to read on?
4. Is there a clear plan and sense of organization to the document? Does each paragraph develop logically from the previous one?
5. Is each paragraph clearly related to the main idea of the essay? Is there enough information in the essay to support the main idea?
6. Is the main point of each paragraph clear? Is each point adequately and clearly defined in a topic sentence and supported with specific details?
7. Are there clear transitions from one paragraph to the next? Have key words and ideas been given proper emphasis in the sentences and paragraphs?
8. Are the sentences clear and direct? Can they be understood on the first reading? Are the sentences varied in length and structure? Could any sentences be improved by combining or restructuring them?
9. Are the words in the section/chapter/thesis clear and precise? Does the essay maintain a consistent tone?
10. Does the section/chapter/thesis have an effective conclusion – one that emphasizes the main idea and provides a sense of completeness?

## Additional Resources

### Style Guidelines

Lumsford, *The St. Martin's Handbook* (**highly recommended**—*St. Martin's* is a comprehensive resource that includes guides to each of the following manuals)

*The Chicago Manual of Style*

*MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing, Third Edition*

*MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, Seventh Edition*

*Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Sixth Edition*

*Scientific Style and Format: The CSE Manual for Authors, Editors, and Publishers, Seventh Edition*

### Responsible Conduct of Research and Scholarship

Responding to Research Wrongdoing: A User-Friendly Guide, Patricia Keith-Spiegel, Joan Sieber, Gerald P. Koocher, [http://www.ethicsresearch.com/images/RRW\\_7-17-10.pdf](http://www.ethicsresearch.com/images/RRW_7-17-10.pdf) [Internet]

*On Being a Scientist: A Guide to Responsible Conduct in Research, Third Edition, Committee on Science, Engineering, and Public Policy*, The National Academies Press 2009

*Everyday Practice of Science: Where Intuition and Passion Meet Objectivity and Logic*, Frederick Grinnell, Oxford University Press 2009

*Introduction to the Responsible Conduct of Research*, Nicholas H. Steneck, Revised Edition, Office of Research Integrity, August 2007

*Plagiarism and Legal Scholarship in the Age of Information Sharing: The Need for Intellectual Honesty*, Carol M. Bast and Linda B. Samuels, 57 Cath. U. L. Rev. 777 2007-2008, <http://heinonline.org> [Internet]

## **Sample Common Thesis Documents**

Title Page

Short Abstract

Long Abstract

Table of Contents Pages

Appendix Pages

Additional formatting may be found in the Graduate School Guidelines:

<http://www.depts.ttu.edu/gradschool/students/current/THDGuidelines.php>.

Thesis students may request MS WORD files for each of these documents from the Undergraduate Research Coordinator.

*Title of Thesis*

by

Author

**AN HONORS THESIS**

for the

**HONORS COLLEGE**

Submitted to the  
Honors College  
at Texas Tech University in  
partial fulfillment of the  
requirement for  
the degree designation of

**HIGHEST HONORS**  
**MONTH AND YEAR** (example: MAY 2014)

Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Thesis Director's Name, Department

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Second Reader's Name, Department

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Thesis Instructor's Name, Honors College

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Honors Dean's Name, Dean, Honors College

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

The author approves the photocopying of this document for educational purposes.

## **SHORT ABSTRACT**

In March of 2010, President Barack Obama signed into law the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, enacting major reforms in the American health care system. Health care reform debates in the United States have historically been starkly divided and deeply impassioned. The result of these dramatic debates has often been the stalemate of any meaningful health care reforms, such as the reform attempts of the Clinton administration in 1993. While the health care reform debates of the Obama administration were also extremely inflamed, reform was not stifled. The following thesis is an exploration of the rhetoric that characterized this health care reform debate in the media by examining articles published online between January 2008 and December 2009.



## LONG ABSTRACT

Any background noise concurrently present with a target signal is called a masking signal. Masking effectiveness, or the degree to which the background signal distorts or covers the target signal, is a factor of the gender, fundamental frequency, and vocal tract length of the background speakers, among other things. The purpose of this study is to determine if greater masking effectiveness translates into greater effort expended by the listener. The study included 10 adult subjects with normal hearing. The study involved a dual task paradigm. That is, the subject was issued two tasks. The target signal (the signal to which the subject was directed to devote his or her primary attention) consisted of a word list presented to the subject via a pre-recorded .wav files. The subject's primary task was to repeat these words as accurately as possible. The target signal was played above a background of speech noise. The speech noise was composed of natural speech recordings from four English speakers (i.e., two male and two female speakers). Subjects simultaneously repeated the word lists and pressed a button when they saw a light-emitting diode (LED) display random presentations of a light source. The reaction time for the secondary task (i.e., pressing the button) was analyzed to judge the listening effort involved in the primary task. The reaction times were measured at 0 dB and -5 dB signal-to-noise ratios (i.e., different loudness levels of the background noise as compared to the words) for each subject. The data was analyzed with a within-subjects analysis of variance. The study sought to prove that the amount of listening effort the subject expends changes when listening to different speakers.

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## APPENDIX A

### Interview Sheet

Age:  
Gender:  
Literacy:  
Level of education:  
Occupation:

#### Questions:

1. Did you vote in the 2009 elections?
2. If you did not vote in the elections is there a particular reason why?
3. Can you rate what you think was the fairness of the elections from 1-10 (10 being the most favorable)?
4. Why did you rate the elections that way?
5. What do you think of when you hear the expression, human rights? Define.
6. Have you noticed an improvement in human rights since the Civil War ended? If yes, go to #7, if no go to #10.
7. If you think human rights have improved ...
  - a. What do you think was the nature of the improvement?
  - b. What do you think led to the improvement?
  - c. When did you notice the improvement began?
8. Do you think that an improvement in human rights affected the 2009 elections in any way?
9. Have you seen or heard of any human rights improvements since the FMLN has been in power?
10. If you do not think human rights have improved ...
  - a. How do you feel about the human rights situation in your country?
  - b. Can you give me an example of why human rights have not improved or decreased?
  - c. What led to that?
  - d. Since when did you notice that begun?
11. What is your interpretation of the term 'leftist' / 'left'? Can you provide any examples?
12. Do you think the FMLN will survive its term? If so, why? If not, why not?

## **Publication of Honors Theses**

The TTU Graduate School is no longer requiring bound copies of theses and as of 2011 the TTU Library is no longer accepting bound theses. Consequently, the Honors College will no longer be binding theses. If you, as an individual, wish to have bound copies of the thesis, there are several options. The TTU Graduate School website provides a link to the on-demand division of the publisher used in prior years. This division, Thesis-On-Demand, has all the specifications and has a positive relationship with TTU. There are also several local printers who can provide bound copies of the thesis. If you wish to have your copies match the style of previous years, the specifications are provided below.

### **Specifications for Thesis Binding**

If you wish to bind your thesis, at your own expense, and want it to look like the Honors thesis from past years, the specifications are below. The last printing done by the Honors College was a local printer who quoted \$95 per book. There is also the Thesis-on-Demand link from the TTU Graduate School website.

Cover: imitation leather in Sunbeam Library Buckram (blue)

Gold stamping of title and author's last name on spine

Optional: gold stamping of name of thesis and author's full name on front cover

Side stitch binding

## **Submission to TTU Library Repository**

Use the naming convention used by TTU Graduate School. Please use the same naming convention for every draft submitted.

    Lastname\_Firstname\_HonorsThesis.doc

Final thesis draft must be submitted in MS Word format.

The License Agreement for storing thesis with TTU Library (available on the next page) must be signed and on file with the Honors Thesis Coordinator by the deadline for final submission of the thesis.

Do not include signatures on the MS Word signature page; this is a TTU Library standard due to possibility of identity theft.

Each Honors Thesis candidate must provide five (5) keywords that are not included in the title of the thesis for the library metadata.

## **LICENSE PERMISSION**

By signing and submitting this license, you (the author(s) or copyright owner) grants to Texas Tech University (TTU) the non-exclusive right to reproduce, translate (as defined below), and/or distribute your submission (including the abstract) worldwide in print and electronic format and in any medium, including but not limited to audio or video.

You agree that TTU may, without changing the content, translate the submission to any medium or format for the purpose of preservation.

You also agree that TTU may keep more than one copy of this submission for purposes of security, back-up, and preservation.

You represent that the submission is your original work, and that you have the right to grant the rights contained in this license. You also represent that your submission does not, to the best of your knowledge, infringe upon anyone's copyright.

If the submission contains material for which you do not hold copyright, you represent that you have obtained the unrestricted permission of the copyright owner to grant TTU the rights required by this license, and that such third-party owned material is clearly identified and acknowledged within the text or content of the submission.

**IF THE SUBMISSION IS BASED UPON WORK THAT HAS BEEN SPONSORED OR SUPPORTED BY AN AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION OTHER THAN TTU, YOU REPRESENT THAT YOU HAVE FULFILLED ANY RIGHT OF REVIEW OR OTHER OBLIGATIONS REQUIRED BY SUCH CONTRACT OR AGREEMENT.**

TTU will clearly identify your name(s) as the author(s) or owner(s) of the submission, and will not make any alteration, other than as allowed by this license, to your submission.

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

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