



HONORS THESIS SURVIVAL GUIDE

With special thanks to

Brigham Young University Honors Program
and
Western Kentucky University Honors Program

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>THESIS INTRODUCTION AND DEADLINES</i>	4
<i>SUGGESTIONS FOR WRITING A STRONG THESIS</i>	5
<i>THESIS PROPOSAL GUIDELINES</i>	11
<i>THESIS PROPOSAL</i>	14
<i>UNIVERSITY HONORS RESEARCH PROJECT APPLICATION</i>	15
<i>THESIS GUIDELINES</i>	16
<i>THESIS SUBMISSION FORM</i>	17
<i>FORMAT REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL THESES</i>	18

THESIS INTRODUCTION AND DEADLINES

A thesis is an excellent way to cap the course of study for a baccalaureate degree in most theoretical, historical, and scientific disciplines. For example, in art history, botany, chemistry, economics, English, French, history, philosophy, psychology, sociology, or zoology, a practitioner would write a text that presents the results of research done in the library, the laboratory, or the field. Essentially, the thesis is a presentation and interpretation of the research results and a demonstration that the student possesses sufficient knowledge of the learning and methods of his discipline to create an original contribution, however small, to his field.

Completing the thesis illustrates to potential graduate/professional school admissions committees or employers that you are capable of carrying a project from the concept stages through to completion. It's also a great chance to showcase your areas of special interest and to demonstrate those creative or technical skills you have developed. But because the thesis work is done outside the highly structured environment of other courses, it's easy to let time slip by without progress. Producing and defending a solid thesis requires self-motivation, focus, and the ability to manage your time and other responsibilities. It is precisely this challenge that gives a completed thesis its value.

Your thesis counts for 3 s.h. You may earn this credit within one semester or within two semesters. For example, you may complete 1 s.h. in the fall and 2 s.h. in the spring or you may earn all 3 s.h. in one term if you prefer. The Honors Director and your thesis advisor will help you decide on an appropriate schedule.

ALL CURRENT DEADLINES ARE POSTED ON THE UWF HONORS WEBSITE AT www.uwf.edu/honors.

Approximate Deadlines for Completing the Thesis for Graduating as a University Honors Scholar

For Completion in	April	August	December
Thesis proposal submitted by	Last week in October	First week in April	Last week of June
Final copy of thesis submitted to Honors by	Second week in April	First week in August	Second week in November

SUGGESTIONS FOR WRITING A STRONG THESIS

There's no strict formula that will ensure you complete (or even begin) a thesis project. Nevertheless, there are some general guidelines that may help you keep on track. Remember, the goal is for you to produce a quality piece of work, one that illustrates the best of what you can achieve. A half-baked thesis, poorly-designed and cobbled together, doesn't showcase your abilities very well and could even be detrimental to your chances of getting that scholarship or job. So, what can you do to maximize your chances of producing the type of thesis you imagine?

GET CONNECTED

Doing your thesis will require you to work closely with your thesis advisor. It is the responsibility of the thesis advisor to provide you with insight, guidance, and support throughout your thesis project; in many cases, he or she may supply you with the topic of the thesis itself. Very few people develop their thesis topic on their own and, in fact, we assume that you will not. Unless you're strongly committed to a single topic, it's better to integrate your project with that of a faculty member in your major department; in this way, you can build on a foundation already established by this individual, as well as support the scholarly focus of that individual, the department and the university.

Obviously, before you can choose a project area for your thesis, you need to be aware of what's going on in your major department. You should investigate the opportunities that may be available: learn who each of the faculty are, talk to them about their scholarly interests, and ask them about what type of projects they might be able to help you develop. Typically, faculty are always anxious to talk about their research or creative activity, especially if there's a chance they can recruit a high-quality student to work with them. Don't be shy, and remember: you're not supposed to know anything about what they do - that's why you're asking them.

When you meet the faculty, you should be looking for several things. First, do their interests complement yours? It's unlikely you'll find someone doing exactly what you want to do. What you should hope to find is someone who can guide you to a project that is interesting, relevant, and meaningful in some way. At this stage in your career, the quality of your project is more important than the question. Second, do they think a creative outlet might exist for the type of project you would undertake with them? Broad dissemination of your work (through publication in a research journal, magazine or newspaper, performance or juried exhibition, radio or television broadcast, etc.) indicates to grad school committees/employers that it is of high quality and gives you one more (very large) advantage in the competition for that scholarship or job. Finally, is the person someone with whom you can get along over an extended period of time? This is not insignificant - if you can't stand your thesis advisor, it makes it much harder to motivate yourself to work on the project.

START EARLY

Probably the biggest reason people fail to complete (or even start) a thesis project is that they wait too long to begin. As a freshman, sophomore or even junior, you might convince yourself that 'I'll do it when I'm a senior.' Then, when you are a senior, the thought of undertaking a project that large is overwhelming. You're busy applying for grad schools or jobs, taking your most difficult classes, and looking forward to kicking back a little in your last

semester - hardly the time to think about finding a thesis advisor, developing a project, carrying it out and getting it written. What's the solution? Don't wait that long. If you start investigating possible projects as a freshman, develop some basic skills and experience as a sophomore, then you'll be ready to hit it hard as a junior and wrap it up midway through your senior year. This is perfect, since you'll already have a completed thesis to show to grad school admission committees/employers by the time you start applying for positions (usually around the beginning of the spring semester of your senior year).

The thesis is not meant to take two or three years of constant, sustained effort; you could easily complete an acceptable thesis in one or two semesters of hard work. But, if you spread that time commitment out over a longer period, it means you'll be better able to budget your time, and the task won't be so onerous as it would be if you were trying to do it all while facing a short deadline. In addition, you'll have time to reflect on your thesis, think about what you've done and what it all means. This is a necessary part of any scholarly endeavor, and your thesis will be better because of it. So, starting early means that you will produce a stronger thesis with less time pressure - all in all, a good combination.

DEVELOP A DETAILED PROPOSAL

Try to do a jigsaw puzzle without a picture - not too easy. Diving into a thesis project without a clear sense of where you're going or hope to end up is very much the same. In fact, puzzles and theses are difficult even with a clear picture of what you're trying to accomplish. But a detailed template does allow you to systematically approach the problem and gives you a reference point to help keep you from drifting too far a field. That's the function of your thesis proposal and why it's so essential to a successful Honors thesis experience.

You need to submit a thesis proposal when you begin your project in earnest before enrolling for thesis credits. The proposal should be developed in collaboration with your thesis advisor. It should identify your topic, the specific goals/hypotheses/aspects you will address, the manner and time frame in which you will complete the project. Developing the proposal will force you to clarify your ideas about the project; the more thoroughly you approach the proposal, the more helpful it will be to you as a reference point later on. Research or project proposals are a common requirement of graduate schools, funding agencies, and corporate America; despite what you may feel as you're writing them, this expectation exists not simply to generate paperwork, but because proposals serve very useful functions in evaluating projects at the outset and monitoring their progress throughout.

One practical reason we require you to file a thesis proposal is that it will allow us to protect your grade until you complete the project. You will receive a "G" for all thesis credits you take until you successfully defend a completed thesis.

STICK TO A ROUTINE

You don't have to make major strides every week, nor do you have to punch a clock to get your thesis done. But you should set and accomplish some reasonable goals each week. Get all the papers you need for Section 3...Block out Act I...Identify and scout out potential sampling sites...If you can do this reliably, you will get your thesis done, and it'll probably be a better product than if you worked feverishly for two months right before graduation. The trick to

producing a solid thesis with a minimum of stress is to be methodical in your approach. Think of the thesis as a series of small, independent tasks that need to be strung together. If you can imagine breaking the job into pieces like that, you can concentrate on completing the next logical task at each stage. This makes it all seem less overwhelming, and helps build momentum (as you gradually start to check off items on your task list). Undertaking the thesis is about creativity, insight, and intellectual challenge, but completing it is about endurance and perseverance. Whatever strategies you can use to maintain your focus will increase the chances that you will finish your project, have it be of high quality, and get it done on time. This might mean setting aside a certain amount of time each week to devote to your thesis work (regardless of how productive you expect it to be), meeting one small goal every day, or committing to presenting your progress to others at certain points (and in a somewhat formal manner) along the way. The essential thing is that you regularly make time to work on the thesis, even if there are a lot of other things going on. If you start using that excuse to justify putting aside your thesis, you'll never finish - there are always other things going on.

Part of your routine should be to meet regularly with your thesis advisor and with the Honors Director to discuss your progress. The purpose of these meetings is not to shame you into working contentiously (though they may well have that effect), but rather to help you stay on a productive track. If you end up floundering for an extended period of time, that will obviously affect your schedule for completion, and likely add stress as well; your director may be able to anticipate and head off problems associated with red tape, your methodology, analytical software, etc. that may otherwise lead to an unproductive period.

KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE BALL

It's easy to get lost in your thesis, and drift away from your original or intended course. As you start researching your topic, collecting data, or even writing, you can easily end up pursuing things tangential to your primary purpose. Some of these tangents are useful and even necessary (since you'll never be able to anticipate exactly what direction you'll need to take in your thesis project); the problem comes when you start chasing tangents of tangents. Left unchecked, you'll look back on your accomplishments six months down the road and wonder how you ended up where you did, and realize that you have little or nothing relevant to your thesis topic to show for your efforts. It's essential that you always look at what you're doing (or about to do) in the context of the overall project. In this way, you'll be able to see early on that you're getting off subject, or to prioritize different tasks with respect to how much they contribute to completing your thesis.

A good thesis proposal is the most important tool to staying on track. If you've carefully thought out your project and outlined the necessary steps in a concrete way, you'll be able to use that document as a context for evaluating what you're doing at any one time. Your thesis advisor should also be able to keep you focused if you meet with him or her on a regular basis. Whatever mechanism you use, you need to continually step back from what you're doing and ask 'What does this contribute to my project' and 'Is this the most essential thing I need to be pursuing in my thesis work right now?' Some bits of work are inherently more valuable than others, but they also all have their place and time to be pursued. So, even if what you're doing seems trivial, it may still be the thing you most need to be doing at the time. On the other hand, something with very exciting long-term potential may be very enticing, but if it prevents you

from making progress on your thesis, it may not be time well spent until the thesis is done.

This is not to say that you need to adhere tightly to your thesis proposal. The proposal was developed before you began the project, and so can't be more than a guide or projected course of action. There's a big advantage to 'going where the project takes you', and where that might be is something you won't find out until you're well into it. As such, you need to be open to shifting your focus in a new direction. You may get a better, more interesting or meaningful thesis as a result. However, if you're going to make such a switch, it needs to be the result of a purposeful decision, not an unintended consequence of failing to pay attention to your initial objectives. Making such a decision requires having an overall plan and evaluating it periodically.

DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THE TIME

Completing the thesis will take longer than you expect it will. Things invariably come up that interrupt your methodical plans. You have those pesky classes to study for, the sources you need from the library are away at the bindery, the instrument you need to analyze your samples breaks down, you get the chance to party in Ft. Lauderdale during Spring Break... All of these things can and do happen, and each one pushes that completion date back just a little bit. Beyond that, you'll be surprised at how long it takes to analyze, synthesize, and organize your information, and especially to get the thesis into final form. In fact, collecting the information and/or data is in many ways the easy part. Making sense of it and presenting it in a way that others can appreciate its significance is much more difficult.

Remember that, when it comes to writing your thesis, you'll be going through multiple drafts. You're not expected to produce a well-polished thesis the first time through; however, you are expected to get to that point, regardless of how many drafts it takes. As such, you can count on your thesis advisor to 'suggest' a large number of revisions. Hopefully these will be largely stylistic, but making the necessary changes still takes a lot of time.

Work with your thesis advisor and determine how long it should reasonably take to compile the information/data/pieces you'll need to complete the thesis. Be sure to build in some time for problems that will arise. Take the number you come up with and double it to get a reasonable estimate of how long it will take you to complete the entire project and defend your thesis. This isn't pessimistic, nor should it scare you off. Rather, it should help you by giving you the chance to develop a realistic plan of action that will allow you finish your thesis but also do all those other things you want to do (like go to the beach).

GET FEEDBACK THROUGHOUT

While the thesis is your work, no scholarship is done completely in a vacuum. You'll need and benefit from guidance, suggestions, and editorial criticism throughout the duration of the project. Scientists have collaborators, writers have editors, artists have muses, and great thinkers have sounding boards. These people all contribute to the production of quality work, no matter what the format. The same is true of your thesis - don't feel you must, should, or even want to work in isolation of those who can offer any or all of these services to you; if you do, your thesis will suffer, and it will be harder for you to even complete the project. Your thesis advisor will provide the majority of this input. You should expect to meet with him or her on a weekly basis, even if it's to report no progress (though hopefully that won't happen too often). Your advisor's

role is to help you focus your topic, point you in the right direction, assist you in obtaining what resources you need, and critique all the intermediate stages of your project. We (and you) rely on him/her to ensure that your thesis project is well conceived and carried out, and that there will be no surprises or disappointments when it comes time to turn in your thesis. You should also select a second reader early in the process, and take advantage of what complementary expertise they have to offer.

It's also important to keep several other people up to date on your progress. Most important, Dr. Lanier, the Honors Director, needs to know where you stand and what your plans are. Because he has seen many theses (successful and not), he can give you valuable insight into designing an appropriate and manageable project, budgeting your time, and preparing a quality product. When you get to the writing stage, he will also give you the editorial and stylistic help you need. You need to meet with Lanier when you initiate your thesis project (prior to submitting your thesis proposal), and arrange to discuss your progress with him on a very regular basis.

The Honors Program also needs to know where you stand. We're interested in seeing that you produce the best possible thesis, for both selfish and more altruistic reasons. Remember that the Honors Program has funds available to support thesis research; if we're familiar with what you're doing, we might be able to suggest creative ways you could take advantage of those funds to enhance your thesis and the experience itself (funds for supplies or travel to develop the thesis, or travel to present your thesis at a meeting, conference or show). For administrative reasons, we also need to have an accurate estimate of who's working on theses, how far along each person is, how many and whose theses will be completed in a given year. Keeping the Honors Program in the dark about your plans makes it more likely that you, your thesis advisor, and your department will be missed when we, for example, develop lists of Honors graduates for recognition in the Commencement program, respond to others inquiring about involvement of various departments in thesis projects, etc. While not very exciting, these are essential kinds of information that we need you to provide to us.

DON'T COUNT ON YOUR LAST SEMESTER

You've gone through nearly four years of college - working hard, worrying about grades so that you'll get into grad school, following the (nearly) straight and narrow path. Midway through your senior year, your grades will have been sent to all those grad schools/professional schools/prospective employers, and you'll just be waiting on their decisions. You'll want to kick back a little in your last semester. Take a few classes, enjoy those last few months as a free and easy college student, and remind yourself why college (despite the work) is so much fun. You should be able to do this. Don't mess it up by putting off finishing your thesis until then. You won't like it, you won't do as good a job, and the experience will seem like more of a burden than an opportunity.

If you've planned and executed your thesis project well, **YOU SHOULD BE DONE BEFORE YOUR LAST SEMESTER.** Again, this is useful because you have a finished product to show to grad schools and prospective employers. On the other hand, if you go into the project expecting to use your last semester to complete the project, you've shortchanged yourself in two ways.

First, you've given yourself no leeway in case something comes up that gets in the way of your finishing the project - your last semester is your last chance. Second and more important, you'll

have deprived yourself of the well-deserved benefit reaped by seniors through the ages - the chance to relax a little at the end. You may well end up finishing your thesis in that semester anyway, but you shouldn't count on doing it that way from the outset.

HAVE THE RIGHT ATTITUDE

The thesis process is at times exhilarating and infused with creative energy; at other times, it's extremely frustrating and tedious. During the discouraging times, you need to maintain the right perspective in order to keep moving forward. Nobody said working on your thesis would always be fun, only that it was a valuable experience. You need to remember why you thought it would be so valuable to you when you started the project. The chance to experience the nuts and bolts of your field...Getting a leg up on those other applicants to grad or professional school...

Producing something that was truly yours...These reasons are just as true in the middle of your thesis endeavor as they were at the beginning. And when you've worked through the short-term difficulties, completed the project and receive your Honors medallion, their significance will be much greater and more tangible than you could have imagined before. That's when the feeling of satisfaction sets in.

Cry, and then get back to work. Former thesis student

THESIS PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

General Instructions

The thesis proposal should be a concise, clear statement of the thesis project. Please write your proposal so that any educated person can easily read and understand it. This means avoiding jargon and special terminology where possible and completely defining all special terms that must be used. The proposal must be typed (typewriter or word processor) and should be no longer than three double-spaced pages (not including bibliography). It must present the following information:

1. THESIS PROPOSAL COVER SHEET

2. THESIS DESCRIPTION and METHOD/DOCUMENTATION: While all theses require scholarship, a thesis can be any one of the following: research project, ethnographic study, performance, creative work, or a project that grows out of an internship or summer travel experience. This section must contain, in clearly identifiable sections, the following information.

3. Complete A, B, or C:

A. *Thesis in the Humanities or the Arts:*

THESIS DESCRIPTION: Describe in a sentence or two the precise question or problem which you are going to address. Then identify possible explanations based on the research and literature in your field. If appropriate, identify a position you will defend. It is altogether insufficient here to state simply that you are going to "research" or "investigate" or "look into" a question or problem.

METHOD: What will your scholarship consist of? It is not enough here simply to state what you are going to read. Explain the questions you will pose and the methods (e.g., type of formal analysis, literary criticism, or hermeneutic) you intend to use to investigate, test, or interpret your thesis. Explain why these methods are feasible and adequate to demonstrate the validity of your thesis.

B. *Thesis in the Sciences or Social Sciences:*

THESIS DESCRIPTION: Describe in a sentence or two the precise question or problem which you are going to address. Then identify possible explanations based on the research and literature in your field. It is altogether insufficient here to state simply that you are going to "research" or "investigate" or "look into" a question or problem.

METHOD: State your research question(s) as clearly as possible. Identify and describe the major variables and concepts you will include in your research project. Provide an overview of the methodology you plan to use. How will you address the research question? Will you use an exploratory, descriptive, or causal research design? How will you select your sample(s)? How will you measure your key concepts and variables? How will you collect your data? How will you analyze your data?

C. Creative performance or production thesis:

THESIS DESCRIPTION: Present your thesis statement in a sentence or two that describes precisely the question or problem which you are going to address. Based on the literature and other documentation in your field, identify probable directions your work will take. It is altogether insufficient to state simply that you are going to create or produce a work of art or a document. Include why this thesis is significant and how it contributes to your learning.

METHOD: How will you communicate your concept? What research will aid you in your conceptual development and execution?

BACKGROUND: (You may place your Background section before the Thesis Description/ Methods section if you wish.) How did you arrive at your thesis idea? If your thesis grew out of your previous academic work, please describe how. What have other scholars/artists had to say about this question or problem? How does your thesis fit into the work these scholars/artists have already done? What is the significance or importance of your thesis? How will this project contribute to your learning?

4. **RESOURCES/BUDGET:** What resources are necessary to undertake this thesis project? Are these resources readily available and how do you plan to secure them? List all expenses (supplies, services, travel, etc.) required for your research or project and the dollar amount for each expense. Add the amounts of the line items for a total. If you have not already submitted the Application for University Honors Research Project, submit it with your proposal.
5. **BIBLIOGRAPHY:** Append a bibliography of books, journal articles, and other sources that will convince the reviewers that adequate resources exist to do the thesis. Divide your bibliography into two parts: a) works you have already consulted, and b) works you plan to consult.

Submission

The proposal should be submitted to Gregory Lanier, Honors Director, in Pace Hall (474-2936). In no more than two weeks (provided that you have met the submission deadline) your proposal will be accepted or returned with suggestions for revision. Failure to include the above information will be cause for return. (Any subsequent revisions of your proposal should also be submitted to Gregory Lanier.) The director of the Honors Program will notify both you and your advisor(s) of his decision.

THESIS PROPOSAL COVER SHEET

Name _____ Student ID Number _____

Local Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Local Telephone (_____) _____ Permanent Telephone (_____) _____

Permanent Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Major(s) _____

Minor(s) _____ Graduation Date _____

Thesis Title

If registered for thesis credit _____

Course Number

Credit Hours

Semester Taken

Please print or type the following information for your advisor:

Advisor: _____ Office _____ Telephone _____

Please obtain the following signatures:

Advisor: _____ Date _____

To be answered by the Honors Director in consultation with the Advisor:

Do the proposed scope and contents of the thesis meet the standards expected of an Honors student? ___ Yes ___ No

Are the methods the student will use clearly explained and is the student capable of using the methods? ___ Yes ___ No

Are the methods appropriate to answer the research questions? ___ Yes ___ No

Comments :

For Office Use Only

Honors Approval _____ Date _____

Comments:

**APPLICATION FOR UNIVERSITY HONORS
RESEARCH PROJECT FUNDS**

The University Honors Research Project is designed to foster research participation between UWF faculty and UWF's best undergraduate students in their attempt to develop Honors theses. Before applying, a student should have in mind a well-focused project and a faculty sponsor willing to collaborate with the student on that project. The student must then submit to the UHP office two copies of the application form and project proposal.

Name _____ Student ID Number _____

Local Address _____ Date _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Local Telephone (_____) _____

Major Department _____ College _____

Thesis Title

Requested funding from your department for your thesis project? ___ Yes ___ No

Thesis proposal ___ Accompanies this application. ___ Has been previously approved.

Proposed funding period will begin and end _____

Month/Year

Month/Year

In what form(s) will the results of your research be reported? _____

Describe briefly the relationship of the proposed funding to the thesis. Include an itemized budget. Attach additional information, if necessary.

Advisor's Signature _____ Date _____

Student's Signature _____ Date _____

For Office Use Only

Honors Program Recommendation (Other sources of funding?)

Approval _____ Amount of Honors Funding _____

Dean's Signature

THESIS GUIDELINES

Students are expected to put their best work into their Honors thesis. *Faculty advisors* are expected to guide students to produce their best work. Both jobs are time-consuming and must be carried out by students and faculty members working together in a disciplined way over a sustained period. Each person has responsibility to see that the necessary work is completed on time. Do not limit your contacts to chance meetings in the hall. Set up a schedule of conferences for the year.

Submission and Final Drafts

The submission draft is the completed thesis bearing the thesis advisor's approval and produced according to the format requirements on page 17. It is due in the Honors Office (Building 50) by 5:00pm on the due date. If the student has multiple thesis advisors, all must approve the submission draft. An advisor's signature on the certification page indicates that the advisor is satisfied the thesis is the best it can be. Normally, this ends the advisor's responsibility for the thesis.

If the Director approves the thesis, s/he may still ask for revisions of the thesis, including mechanical errors (typos, punctuation, grammar, etc.) and minor substantive problems (organization, refinement of terminology, etc.). In such cases, the Director will sign his/her approval of the thesis and it will be returned to the student for correction.

The Director may decline to approve the thesis before seeing substantive revisions such as major reorganization or to remedy insufficient content, errors of interpretation, etc. In such a case, the thesis will be returned to the student and advisor to discuss the needed changes. The thesis must be acceptable to all readers before it is approved.

Presentation

In order to graduate as an Honors Scholar, students must present their thesis at one of the following events:

- a state, regional, or national Honors conference
- a conference within the student's field of study
- the annual Honors Symposium

Registration for Honors Thesis Credit

Students may register for the Honors Thesis course in any term. The course carries three hours of academic credit which can be spread over two terms.

The thesis advisor assigns the grade for Honors Thesis credit. The grade for an approved thesis must be satisfactory. If the thesis is not complete, the advisor assigns a grade of "G," then updates the grade when the thesis has been approved.

THESIS SUBMISSION FORM

Name _____ Student ID Number _____

Submission Date _____ Semester of Graduation _____

Major (s) _____ Minor _____

Thesis Title

Faculty Advisor

Approximate Hours Spent on Thesis _____ Research _____

Writing _____

The thesis will be submitted for publication in the following journal (not required):

I submit my work for approval of the thesis requirement for graduation with University Honors.

Student's Signature _____ Date _____

As the thesis faculty advisor, I certify that the attached thesis is in final form and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the thesis requirement.

Advisor's Signature _____ Date _____

<p><i>For Office Use Only</i></p> <p>Portfolio Pass or Fail _____</p> <p>Recommendation of Director _____</p> <p>Comments _____</p> <p>Rank of Thesis _____</p> <p>(Superior/Excellent/Good/Satisfactory/Unacceptable)</p>
--

FORMAT REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL THESES

Margins and Fonts

Observe these guidelines:

1. Leave a margin of one and one-half inches on the left side of each page to allow for binding.
2. Leave one-inch margins on the top, bottom, and right side of each page.
3. Do not justify the right margin; doing so makes the text more difficult to read.
4. Use at least a 12-point font for the body of the thesis (footnotes and captions for tables and figures can be set in a smaller font.)
5. Use a serif font for the text of the paper; research shows it is easier to read (i.e. Arial).
6. You may use a sans serif font for titles and headings, if desired.

This is an example of a sans serif font.

Front matter

The following pages should come before the text of the thesis in the order indicated.

1. Title/signature page
2. Acknowledgments page, if desired
3. Table of Contents
4. List of Tables and Figures, if any have been used in the thesis
5. Abstract (summary) of the thesis

Body of the thesis

Please observe the following conventions in organizing the body of the thesis.

1. The body of the thesis should be between 15 and 25 pages long.
2. Divide the body of the thesis into sections or chapters as indicated in the Table of Contents.
3. Give each section or chapter a heading that corresponds to headings used in the Table of Contents.
4. Number all pages of the body of the thesis sequentially with Arabic numerals.
5. Number tables, if any, sequentially, e.g., Table 1, Table 2, etc.
6. Number figures, if used, sequentially, e.g., Figure 1, Figure 2, etc. Figures include drawings, graphs, photos, diagrams, maps—anything that is not a table.
7. Give each table or figure a descriptive caption that explains clearly what is presented in the table or figure.
8. Place tables and figures close to the relevant text, but not before a reader needs them.

Back Matter

All theses will have the first of these, and many will have the second.

1. References, Selected Bibliography, Works Cited, or Works Consulted. The title you use will depend on the documentation style you have followed. These pages must contain full bibliographic citations for all documents, printed or electronic, you have consulted and cited in the thesis.
2. Appendix(es). Place in an appendix raw data (e.g., calculations, transcripts,

tabulations, matrices, etc.) which your readers are likely to want to see but which are either peripheral to the argument or too bulky to put in the body of the thesis.

Sample
Thesis Title

A Thesis
Presented to the Department of History
College of Arts and Sciences
and
The Honors Program
of
University of West Florida

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for Graduation Honors

Your name as it will appear on your diploma

Date