Proposal Due: _____

Honors Research Symposium (HRS) Presentation &

 Senior Project Due: _____

Senior Project Guide

Priorities:

The Honors College Senior Project Guide

Why Research?

Research is an exciting avenue for learning that reaches beyond the traditional classroom. In doing research, Honors students pursue their academic interests at a deeper level, creating or contributing new knowledge in their major, and cultivating relationships with faculty mentors. Research also helps Honors students develop the communication and critical thinking skills necessary for graduate school and professional employment.

Honors and Research

The Honors Senior Project completes your Honors degree. The project is a prized academic achievement, the product of a great amount of research, analysis and writing. While the project will serve as a remarkable personal achievement, it will also provide evidence—to graduate school admissions committees, scholarship review boards, and prospective employers—that Honors student not only have the academic capability, but also the intellectual maturity to pursue independent academic endeavors.

Research opportunities exist in all fields of study at UT Arlington. Honors students work under the mentorship of full-time faculty, who are committed to the success of emerging researchers.

Campus Research Opportunities

The following programs connect mentoring professors with undergraduate students. Honors students are encouraged to study the following programs, as each is a potential vehicle to complete the Honors Senior Project. Some programs offer financial assistance as well (check the websites for more information).

Honors College Undergraduate Research Fellowships (URF)
http://www.uta.edu/honors/funding/urf/

Undergraduate Research Fellowships (URFs) provide select Honors undergraduate students with hands-on research during the summer in any discipline. Students work under faculty mentors to gain important research skills and contribute to projects that are a vital part of the academic experience.

McNair Scholars Program
http://www.uta.edu/soar/mcnair/services.php

The McNair Scholars Program provides opportunities to low-income, first-generation students, or those from underrepresented groups to prepare for future graduate study culminating in the PhD. Through its seminars, research institute, summer research internship, GRE preparation, ongoing guidance in the graduate school application process, and travel (to conferences, graduate fairs and prospective graduate programs), the McNair Program informs, strengthens, and encourages talented undergraduates to transcend the challenges posed by economic background, level of parental education, or minority status to enter the professoriate and engage in a life of research and teaching.

UTA Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program (UROP)
http://www.uta.edu/research/vpr/research-opportunities/undergraduate/Programs/urop.php

The UTA Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program (UROP) facilitates undergraduate participation in faculty-mentored research or creative projects. Funding is awarded to students for a semester while they assume apprenticeship with a faculty mentor's research group.

What is the Honors College Senior Project?

Individual departments have different expectations for completing the Honors Senior Project; thus, depending on your major, there are up to five options available to you. The unifying thread for all Honors Senior Projects is that they contribute to the development of disciplinary knowledge or practice in new ways, and that they result in a piece of substantive written work that addresses a disciplinary problem and documents the student's learning process and outcomes.

What are the Options?

1. Thesis / Creative Project / Group Project
   The thesis/creative project offers students the opportunity to complete sustained original research or creative activity in their major field. Students in any major may select the thesis option; however, the group project is limited to engineering majors and the creative project is limited to fine arts majors.
2. Internship
   Students work with a faculty mentor to produce a detailed, substantive written project that focuses on a disciplinary problem and documents how the internship helped them in addressing and/or understanding the problem.
3. Service Learning
   Students work with a faculty mentor to produce a detailed, substantive written project that focuses on a disciplinary problem and documents how the community service learning project helped them in addressing and/or understanding the problem.
4. Study Abroad
   Students work with their major advisor to identify appropriate courses that can be applied to their degree and normally spend one or two semesters abroad (fall and/or spring only for senior projects). These students also work with a UTA faculty mentor to produce a detailed, substantive written project that focuses on a disciplinary problem and documents how the study abroad experience helped them in addressing and/or understanding the problem.

What is the best option?

Check which options are available in your major discipline and then think about which option(s) will serve your needs the best.

- "*I want to study something further*" (Thesis option)
- "*I need to learn real-world applications*" (Internship or Service Learning option)
- "*This organization fascinates me and I want to learn more*" (Service Learning or Internship option)
- "*I want to produce a play*" (Creative Project option)
- "*I want to participate in my mentor's ongoing research*" (Thesis option)
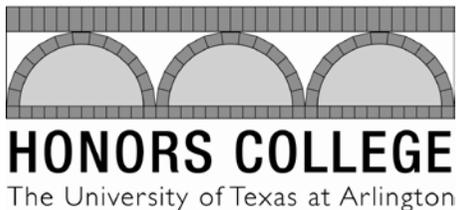
The following departmental options for the Honors Senior Project are subject to change. Please confirm with an Honors advisor prior to submitting your proposal.

College of Architecture, Planning, and Public Affairs
Architecture majors are required to do the thesis or creative activity option

College of Business
Majors may choose from the thesis, study abroad*, internship* or service learning*

College of Education
Curriculum and Instruction – Thesis or internship*
All other Education majors – Thesis

College of Engineering
All majors may choose the thesis, enhanced group project, study abroad*, internship*, or service learning*

College of Liberal Arts – see your academic major below for available options.
Anthropology – Thesis
Art and Art History – Thesis, creative activity, study abroad*, or internship*
Communications – Thesis, study abroad*, service learning*, or internship*
Criminology and Criminal Justice – Thesis
English – Thesis, study abroad*, service learning*, or internship*
History – Thesis
Linguistics/TESOL – Thesis, study abroad*, service learning*, or internship*
Modern Languages – Thesis, study abroad*, service learning*, or internship*
Music – Thesis, creative activity, study abroad*, service learning*, or internship*
Philosophy – Thesis
Political Science – Thesis
Sociology – Thesis
Theatre – Thesis, creative activity*, study abroad*, or internship*

College of Nursing and Health Innovations
Nursing – Thesis, internship*, or service learning*
Kinesiology – Thesis, study abroad*, internship*, or service learning*

College of Science – see your academic major below for available options.
Biology – Thesis
Chemistry and Biochemistry – Thesis
Geology – Thesis or study abroad*
Mathematics – Thesis or study abroad* (must be department-approved)
Physics – Thesis
Psychology –Thesis

School of Social Work
Majors may choose the thesis, study abroad*, internship*, or service learning*

University College (Interdisciplinary Studies)
Interdisciplinary Study major may choose the thesis or creative activity
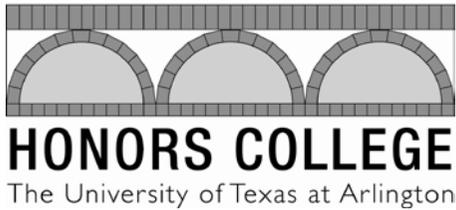
Selecting a Faculty Mentor

When approaching faculty, it is important to be clear, precise, and focused on your Senior Project topic. Be sure you study the research interests of the faculty member you are approaching. Visit their web pages, read their vitas which are often online, and be sure that their research relates to your topic of interest as much as possible.

Be prepared if your first choice for a mentor declines. You might ask if he or she could recommend another faculty member. You generally get better results when approaching a faculty member you do not know by saying, "Dr. Smith suggested that I ask you about the possibility of being a mentor for my Honors College Senior Project."

Ideas on finding and choosing a faculty mentor:
- Talk to faculty with whom you have taken a class
- Visit departmental websites and instructor profile pages
- Ask your advisors and other faculty

The Honors Senior Project is the culmination and signature product of a student's Honors degree at the University of Texas at Arlington; thus, **only full-time UT Arlington faculty members and instructors are permitted to serve as mentors**. Additionally, Honors students cannot conduct their Honors Senior Project under the direct supervision of a faculty member at another university, professional school, or research institution.

Faculty Mentor and Student Relationship Expectations

As an Honors student, you are responsible for:
- Keeping your faculty mentor informed about Honors College timelines and due dates
- Discussing with your mentor how you plan to accomplish your Senior Project
- Providing your mentor with the Senior Project template and discussing major-specific citation and writing styles
- Letting your mentor know that you will use the Writing Center as necessary
- Giving your mentor draft(s) of the written project for review and editing before submitting it to the Honors College

Your faculty mentor is responsible for:
- Helping you narrow the focus of your topic to something that you can handle given the timeframe and your research experience
- Discussing ethical considerations, such as whether or not you need IRB (Institutional Review Board) approval
- Giving suggestions on relevant bibliography materials
- Reviewing and editing your Proposal *and* your Senior Project (before submission) to ensure the writing (grammar, punctuation, etc.), methodology, data presentation, and citations are correct and appropriate for your specific professional discipline
- Signing the Senior Project Proposal and Senior Project Approval forms
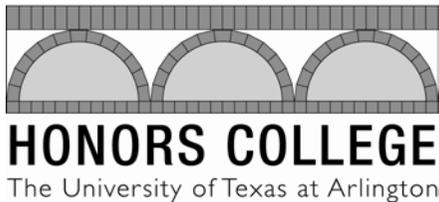
The proposal should be specific, clear and succinct: what the focus of the research will be, what research has already been conducted on the subject, why the topic is worthy of investigation, and what methodology will be used.

The proposal should be two to three pages (single-spaced), plus a preliminary bibliography.

On the proposal form, identify which of the options you will use to complete your Senior Project. No matter which option you choose, your proposal should be written in full sentences (not bullet-points) and broken into sections—*do not write this in an essay format*. These section titles generally include, but are *not limited to*:

Statement of Problem or Research Question (a few sentences)

Research begins with the identification of a disciplinary problem needing a solution, an unanswered question, or a claim needing proof. Specify the problem, question, theme, or claim to be investigated. Your research may be a more in-depth investigation of a past class project, a specific issue you are interested in, or it may contribute to the ongoing research of your mentor. If this is the case, you will need to craft your problem statement to clarify the relevance of your contribution.

Summary of Peer-Reviewed Scholarship Relevant to your Research (a few paragraphs)

After reviewing the scholarly literature that has been published on your topic, briefly summarize what is already known about the problem, question, or claim to be investigated. If you will be replicating a previous study, specify how and why your research will be different. Google Scholar is a good resource for finding relevant peer-reviewed research.

Significance of the Research (a few paragraphs)

Indicate why your research is necessary and important (in other words, address the "so what?" question). Describe how it will contribute to the body of knowledge in your field or profession.

Methodology (a few paragraphs)

Your supervising professor will help you determine the best methodology for your project. This section should describe the manner in which the disciplinary problem, question, or claim to be investigated will be evaluated and why the method is appropriate for your research.

***If you have chosen the study abroad, service learning, or internship option, your methodology will have two parts. The first method will be the academic basis as stated above (this is the same type of methodology that is typically found in a thesis). The second part will be rooted in your work outside of the university setting. Specifically, how you plan to make use of the community knowledge or the workplace experience in your research. If human subjects are part of your research, you may be required to go through the Institutional Research Board (IRB).

Preliminary Bibliography

Attach a preliminary list of relevant scholarly sources as noted above in the *Summary of Peer-Reviewed Scholarship* section. Note: Your mentor will determine which citation style is most appropriate for your discipline; you are responsible for ensuring that all in-text and references section citations are correct. Owl Purdue is one resource that contains information on the most common reference styles (https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/).

For the Senior Project proposal, students **should have no less than five sources**; more if possible.

***Internships and service learning projects should also include the location and name of the supervisor.
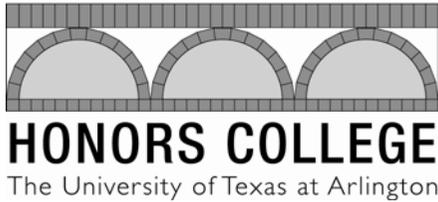
Honors College Senior Project
Group/Senior Project Proposal
Engineering Majors

This proposal format is for engineering students who choose the Senior Design Group/Honors Senior Project option <u>ONLY</u>. Engineering students who choose any other option should refer to the Senior Project proposal outline for non-engineering students.

The Senior Project proposal should be specific, clear and succinct: what the focus of the research will be, what research has already been conducted on the subject, why it is worthy of investigation, and what methodology will be used.

<u>The proposal should be two to three pages (single-spaced), plus a preliminary bibliography</u>.

Your proposal should be written in full sentences (not bullet-points) and broken into sections—*do not write this in an essay format*. These section titles generally include, but are <u>not limited to</u>:

<u>Statement of Problem or Research Question (a few sentences)</u>
Research begins with the identification of a disciplinary problem needing a solution, an unanswered question, or a claim needing proof. Because the Engineering Senior Design project is a group effort, a brief description of the overall project is necessary. For your Honors Senior Project, you must *clarify precisely what your individual contribution to the group project will be*; demonstrating how you will engage with the project on a deeper level than your non-Honors classmates. Just as you have done for many of your Honors contract courses, ask yourself, "What makes my contribution to the project worthy of Honors credit?" Consider the following examples:

- a more comprehensive search and analysis of the specialist literature;
- a consideration of the historical context of the problem your team seeks to solve;
- an essay on the engineering/technical ramifications of your group project;
- an excursus on other, broader applications that your project might inspire in the real world;

<u>Summary of Peer-Reviewed Scholarship Relevant to your Research (a few paragraphs)</u>
Briefly summarize what is already known about the problem you will be addressing. You may use past examples, plans, engineering diagrams or other appropriate scholarship. Many group projects are a prototype of a future model. If this is the case, remember that the prototype is still based on existing theories. Google Scholar is a good resource for finding relevant peer-reviewed research.

<u>Significance</u>
Clarify how your *individual contribution* to the group project will add value to the overall topic and the body of knowledge in your specific field or profession.

<u>Methodology (a few paragraphs)</u>
Your senior design instructor will help you determine the best methodology for your project. This section should describe the manner in which the disciplinary problem, question, or claim to be investigated will be evaluated and why the method is appropriate for your research.

<u>Preliminary Bibliography</u>
Attach a preliminary list of relevant scholarly sources as noted above in the *Summary of Peer-Reviewed Scholarship* section. Note: Your mentor will determine which citation style is most appropriate for your discipline; you are responsible for ensuring that all in-text and references section citations are correct. Owl Purdue is one resource that contains information on the most common reference styles (https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/).

***List the other students in your group and include what their individual responsibilities within the larger group project are.
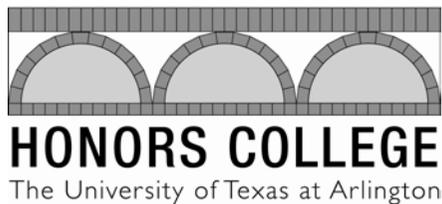
Honors College Senior Project
Writing the Senior Project

Honors College Expectations for the Final Written Project

No matter which option you chose, the written portion of your Senior Project must follow the formatting traditions of the Honors thesis. This template is available at http://www.uta.edu/honors/_doc/senior-project/senior-project-template.docx.

The template provides guidelines for the required formatting (title page, table of contents, acknowledgements, abstract, margins, captions, illustrations, spacing, etc.). The template also provides a framework for organizing your writing. While you must follow specifics regarding the formatting, you may decide to organize your writing differently (e.g., having only four chapters instead of five, etc.). Any additions (such as graded assignments, blog entries, surveys, creative designs, etc.) that are not in the template itself must be contained in an appendix.

The writing style depends on the standards of your academic discipline. Be sure to consult with your faculty mentor on what the appropriate citation style for your discipline is. There are writing guides available for all styles and a librarian can assist you on any specific questions. You can set an appointment by contacting the central library.

Your mentor must review the final draft of your Senior Project before signing the Senior Project Approval Form. You are responsible for ensuring that you address all of their editorial comments and that all of the necessary revisions are made. The initial draft you submit to your mentor *must be done in time for the "final" draft to be submitted to the Honors College at the Honors Research Symposium (HRS). Do not submit a draft that has not been edited by your mentor*, as this often results in numerous revisions and could delay your Honors diploma.

Before Submitting

Keep in mind that the written component you submit to the Honors College is more than a class assignment. No less than the traditional senior theses submitted by students in other schools and colleges at the University, your submission will be a permanent record of your crowning achievement as an Honors student. All Honors Senior Projects are kept on file for consultation by future students who want to see an example of what constitutes an Honors-worthy Senior Project. For this reason alone, you should strive to make it the best presentation it can be, with careful attention to organization, writing, graphics, and overall presentation. The Honors College will review your submission carefully, and will return it to you for revision if it does not meet the College's expectations with regard to format, writing, and production.

One of the functions of your faculty mentor is to ensure that your Honors submission is presentable, and you should not be shy about seeking his or her guidance. If your writing skills are in need of work, there are resources available to assist you (e.g., COMS 3302, the Writing Center, etc.). In some cases, it might be necessary to seek the services of a professional editor. *Ultimately, it is the student's responsibility to submit an acceptable product to earn the Honors degree.*

Submitting Your Senior Project

The Senior Project is always due on the same day as the Honors Research Symposium (HRS) in the semester it is presented. Engineering students submit their final project on the last official day of classes, before final exams; however, students can always submit their project any time prior to the due date. Please ensure the following are completed before submission:

1. _____The Senior Project is in the Honors College template and formatted correctly.
2. _____Ensure that the document is free of grammar, syntax, punctuation, and spelling errors.
3. _____Your faculty mentor has signed the Approval Form and it is submitted *with* your Senior Project.
4. _____Use standard paper only and a binding clip. *Do not submit the project in a binder, folder, etc.*
5. _____Submit a hard-copy version of your Senior Project. *Do not submit an electronic version.*

Honors College Senior Project
Timeline

Academic departments have up to four options for the Senior Project. Be sure you know what the options are in your major by checking the Honors College Senior Project Guide, website, or by speaking with an Honors advisor.

PHASE ONE – DISCOVERING YOUR INTERESTS (FRESHMAN/SOPHOMORE):

_____ Attend Senior Project information sessions

_____ Familiarize yourself with the Senior Project options in your major

_____ Think about possible topics based on your interests

_____ Contract courses for Honors credit to develop those interests

_____ ***Read your MavMail regularly***

PHASE TWO – DEVELOPING AND WRITING THE PROPOSAL (SOPHOMORE/JUNIOR):

_____ Focus on your topic of interest by doing background research (the topic must be relevant to your major)

_____ Get to know professors' interests by talking to them and visiting their profile pages

_____ Select a Faculty Mentor in your major department
Your mentor must be a tenured or tenure-track faculty member (assistant, associate or full professor) or a full-time lecturer. Adjunct professors, part-time instructors, and teaching assistants are not eligible to serve as Honors mentors. ***Finding an appropriate mentor is the student's responsibility***. If you are unsure of a prospective mentor's status, ask him/her or an Honors advisor.

_____ Consider applying for the Honors College Undergraduate Research Fellowship (URF) program, or for other research and leadership opportunities such as the McNair Program, L-SAMP, and the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program (UROP).

_____ Ensure that you have completed (or will have completed) a minimum of 18 hours of Honors credits ***before*** you begin working on your Senior Project.

_____ Following the instructions in this Guide, write and submit your Senior Project Proposal

_____ ***Read your MavMail regularly***

PHASE THREE – COMPLETING THE SENIOR PROJECT (JUNIOR/SENIOR):

_____ ***Read your MavMail regularly*** (*always important*, but it is ***imperative now***)

_____ Enroll in the appropriate independent study course specified by your major department (optional)

_____ Complete the research, data collection/analysis, and writing of your Senior Project

_____ Submit an abstract for your Honors Research Symposium (HRS) presentation

_____ Attend a *mandatory* Senior Project Template Formatting Workshop

_____ Have your faculty mentor review and edit your work, and sign the Senior Project Approval form

_____ Present your Senior Project at the Honors Research Symposium (HRS) in the fall or spring semester

_____ Graduate with your Honors degree!!!