



# Department Honors Scholar Handbook

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## INTRODUCTION

To be eligible for Department Honors, a student must be in good standing in University Honors or have a cumulative GPA of 3.50 or higher. Students transferring to UNLV for their junior year may join Department Honors if their cumulative GPA is 3.50 or higher. Students applying for admission to Department Honors are usually sophomores who begin the process at the start of their junior year. **BEFORE APPLYING, YOU MUST MEET WITH THE ASSOCIATE DEAN or DEAN.** See **APPENDIX A** for application and instructions.

*Students in Department Honors must take four HON 400H seminars.* Each of the four Honors seminars can be used to satisfy General Education Core requirements in social science, humanities, or fine arts. In addition to the four seminars, students must also complete a six-credit honors thesis/project their senior year (HON 498H and HON 499H). To graduate with Department Honors, students must earn a B- or better on all courses used as part of the Honors core.

Students may replace HON 498H with an equivalent three-credit course from the department sponsoring the Honors thesis/project. This substitution is allowed as long as the department course meets the requirements of HON 498H, which is intended to provide three credits for the research phase of the thesis project. Thus, if a student chooses to substitute a course for HON 498H, the work completed in the substitute course must form the foundation for HON 499H, the second half of the Honors thesis/project.

Requirements of HON 498H include 1) forming a committee and beginning research on the thesis/project, 2) meeting with the Associate Dean or Dean of Honors ~ two times during the semester (2<sup>nd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> weeks), and 3) presenting a visual representation of the work-in-progress at a Poster Session as a required part of HON 498 H. HON 498H is offered only with the S/F grading option.

Requirements of HON 499 include 1) a final presentation before a three-member committee in HON 499 H, and 2) an oral examination, usually right after the final presentation, that requires students to answer questions about the thesis/project. HON 499H is offered with the regular grading option and the grade is based on the quality of the thesis/project and the clarity and depth of understanding demonstrated at the final presentation. The two-semester, six-credit thesis/project may, at the discretion of the sponsoring department, satisfy elective credits in that department.

There are two options for completing an Honors thesis/project. The first option is to create a work of art or project appropriate to the student's chosen discipline. Choreographing a dance, writing a novella or collection of short stories, or composing a musical piece are available to those interested in the fine or performing arts. Students should discuss these creative projects carefully with their full-time Faculty Advisor and the Associate Dean of the Honors College. The second option is the more traditional academic approach. The Honors thesis is a substantial research project in which the student does original research appropriate to the

discipline/academic department that is sponsoring your work. Students are encouraged to do field observation, analysis of printed sources, interviews, or controlled experimentation.

Students who complete Department Honors with a grade of “A” on their senior thesis/project (HON 499H) will graduate *cum laude* if their cumulative UNLV GPA is between 3.30 and 3.49; *magna cum laude* if their UNLV GPA is between 3.50 and 3.69; or *summa cum laude* if their UNLV GPA is 3.70 or higher.

\* Students found to have violated the Honors College Code of Honor will be subject to the sanctions specified in that code (see our website: [honors.unlv.edu](http://honors.unlv.edu)).

In some instances, the Honors thesis/project may dovetail with or replace the thesis/project requirement within a given department. The mechanism for doing so is to replace HON 498H with an equivalent 3-or-more credit course from the department sponsoring the honors thesis/project. This substitution is allowed as long as the department course meets the requirements of HON 498H, which is intended to provide three credits for the research phase of the thesis project. Thus, if you choose to substitute a course for HON 498H, the work completed in the substitute course must form the foundation for HON 499H, the second half of the Honors thesis project. See **APPENDIX B** for an approval form to substitute a senior project course for HON 498 H.

The thesis project includes presenting a visual representation of your work-in-progress at a Poster Session held each semester (a requirement of HON 498) and culminates in a final presentation before a three-member committee, a representative from the Honors College, and appropriate audience as part of the grade received for HON 499H. Committee members will conduct an oral examination immediately following the presentation. Those in the audience who are not members of the student’s committee or a representative from the Honors College will be excused during the oral examination. See **APPENDIX C** for a copy of the Final Exam Scheduling Form, and a Final Exam Signature Form. It is your responsibility to complete the forms in a timely fashion. These completed forms must be in your file before you can graduate.

## VALUE OF THE HONORS THESIS/PROJECT

Obviously, this thesis/project will require considerable effort from you. In the work you do after graduation and in your activities as a responsible member of our society, you will need the abilities developed during the process of completing this thesis: researching, creating, analyzing and evaluating data, and writing and speaking about your knowledge and conclusions. Your efforts to develop these essential abilities during your undergraduate years culminate in the completion of your senior thesis.

Many students are reluctant to undertake the thesis project because of one or more of the following reasons: 1) fright, 2) laziness, 3) too much work, 4) not enough time to do the thesis, or 5) wanting to take other classes. Those who complete the thesis, however, remark overwhelmingly that if they had not done the thesis, they feel they would have missed an important educational experience. Many report that having completed a thesis gave them a competitive advantage when applying to prestigious graduate and professional programs and that the thesis experience was valuable preparation for the writing and independent research typically required in graduate programs.

There are other benefits as well. Graduates reported that through doing the thesis, they learned how to follow a major project through to completion. They learned how to use the library, how to talk to professionals and professors about their subject, and how to gather and analyze data. They reported that they gained confidence and improved their writing skills, their ability to make oral presentations, and their time-management skills.

The senior thesis models a process of inquiry and communication that will have professional value. Thesis-like activities (e.g., gathering and analyzing data, planning, drafting, editing, rewriting and making oral presentations) are critical skills required in any profession. Completing a thesis prepares you to write a master's thesis or strategic plan. It helps you perfect the skills necessary to take an idea to fruition. As such, it is a natural progression or stepping stone in your academic, professional and personal growth.

The thesis will demonstrate your abilities and reflect directly on the perception people have of you, your sponsoring department, the Honors College, and UNLV. Thus you are encouraged to do your best work.

## CONTENT OF THE HONORS THESIS/PROJECT

The content of a project involving the fine and performing arts is difficult to define in a handbook such as this one. The actual project in these areas is the subject of negotiations among the student, the advisor, and the Honors College. Students should recognize that the Honors College enthusiastically supports creative activity on campus.

Expectations about traditional academic writing for an honors thesis are easier to articulate. An acceptable thesis will have these six characteristics: it is driven by questions, it is original, it is public, it is substantial, it is shaped through interaction with an advisor, and it is scholarly.

1. The thesis is driven by questions. Research is a search for knowledge and understanding of a defined topic. Students often mistakenly believe that research means collecting huge quantities of information about a topic and then patching it together into a monstrous book report. Research is not simply a collection of data; instead, it is an attempt to answer a question or a set of questions. The information you need to collect is whatever will allow you to answer the critical questions that fuel your whole research process.

Obviously, the initial critical questions that focus your study may not necessarily end up being the questions that you address in your thesis. You may find that you need to expand or (more often) narrow your questions. In fact, the process of research itself may lead you to new questions that you could not have articulated before your research began; these questions frequently become more important than your original questions. If your questions change, don't be alarmed, it is normal and actually is an indicator that you are progressing and developing a fuller understanding of your topic.

2. The thesis is original. If you are not conducting field research or doing experiments, choose instead to work solely with printed sources written by others, your thesis should and must be original work. The questions you ask of your sources, the insights you have, and the purposes for which you draw upon the sources allow you to write something that is creative and original. Your thesis may apply a hypothesis to data, which has not been tested against that hypothesis, or you may analyze a body of information from a particular value framework or with a set of policy alternatives. Your thesis might, for example, apply a critical methodology to a particular work of literature. In any case, the thesis is your work and must be driven by your own questions. **Don't be afraid to think originally.**

3. The thesis is public. Unlike most papers you have written, the thesis is not something that passes only between you and your instructor. The finished thesis is a public document that is available not only in the Honors office, but in the University archives housed in the Special Collections of the Lied Library.

Your thesis should be written to be read. This comment may sound obvious, but readers do approach research documents like your thesis not to be entertained, but because they need something from it. The decisions you make about what information to include, how to organize

it, how to format it, what connections to make or conclusions to draw should be made with the idea that readers will be trying to understand and use what you have written.

4. The thesis is substantial. The scale of this project makes it qualitatively different from shorter papers you may have done before. A paper of 30-40 pages of text is not the same thing as three or four 10-page papers stacked on top of each other. You must select an issue that is large enough to be significant, and you must focus it in a way that makes it manageable, given the available resources and the limitations of space and time.

*How long should the thesis be?* The best answer to the question of length is that the thesis should be as long as your topic warrants. That answer, however, does not provide much help when you are trying to decide on the intellectual boundaries to the project, the scope and the level of detail of your treatment, and the time and energy you will need. A good goal to aim for is a document of 30-40 pages of text, not including appendices, notes, and bibliography.

5. The thesis is shaped through interaction with an advisor. Throughout this project you will be closely involved with a faculty advisor. The success or failure of your thesis depends to a great extent on your careful selection of a thesis advisor and your ability to work with that person. The advisor should provide you with guidance and feedback throughout your research process; your advisor should be able to help you define your topic, clarify your research questions, locate sources, formulate a thesis, and draw conclusions. Learning how to use the support system of an advisor is an important part of the thesis experience.

6. The thesis is scholarly. This criterion both sums up and goes beyond the other five. A clear understanding of scholarship is important, both as a goal for your own work and as a standard to judge the sources you use. A work may be considered scholarly without meeting all of the criteria below, but the more strongly it meets each of them, the more scholarly it is:

- a) Scholarly works are published in respected journals or in book form.
- b) Scholarly works rely upon the expert wisdom and literature of the field. Such works reflect the author's familiarity with the conventional wisdom of the field (in other words, the common assumptions and beliefs of other scholars studying your topic), and if it departs in new directions, it presents a sound and rational defense for its departure.
- c) Scholarly works are the product of a thorough, critical, and analytic mind looking at all sides of an issue or topic. A scholar will examine and marshal evidence fairly and completely. A scholar will support the findings of a careful investigation, but a scholar is always willing to question methodologies and data. In other words, a scholarly work demonstrates a search for truth rather than a defense of a hasty conclusion.
- d) Scholarly works demonstrate to other scholars that the writer is a competent specialist who understands the theories, concepts, and knowledge of the field of expertise.

- e) Scholarly works are honest about the author's political commitments and moral values relevant to the object of study. Such works do not pretend to be value-free, but rather recognize that an author's values and commitments will inevitably inform a work.
- f) Scholarly works are potentially useful to other writers.

Do not be overwhelmed by all of these criteria. A Ph.D. dissertation or an article published by one of your professors in a professional journal may not meet all of these criteria fully, but they are goals for which to aim. Nevertheless, the closer you come to them, the better your thesis will be. While your thesis is not a Ph.D. or M.A. thesis, it is a project requiring a major commitment of your time and energy. Perhaps the most important piece of advice in this manual is to ***find a topic you love***, one you can remain committed to across peaks and valleys of interest and energy. Otherwise, you may not be able to stick with it all the way to the finish.

## HON 498H & HON 499H: HONORS THESIS/PROJECT

HON 498H is designed to help you get your honors thesis underway; HON 499H will help you bring the thesis to completion. Guidelines for both courses are attached in **APPENDIX D**.

As you begin your thesis, you should realize that this process will involve considerable starting and stopping, refining and focusing. One lesson to learn from this experience is that a project of this complexity rarely moves in a straight line from start to finish.

Before you enroll in HON 498H, you need to do three things: choose a topic, choose an advisor, and fill out the Proposal for Honors Project form. These forms are included in **APPENDIX E**. You need to consider decisions concerning the selection of your advisor and a thesis topic carefully because you are making a commitment that will carry you through the rest of the project.

Because of the preparation required to register for the six-credit thesis project, you will need to come to the process with a good idea of your topic. Your previous course work and other experiences, academic and otherwise, will help you choose a topic area of interest. Past academic activities, such as short papers and readings from a variety of courses, may help you to determine a starting point. Building on previous work by using both the knowledge and interest you have already developed is recommended and encouraged. You may begin with several possible topics in mind or with several possible approaches to one large topic area.

When you have some strong possibilities in mind, you should begin to look for a full-time faculty advisor. An advisor might be an instructor you have had in a previous course or someone who has supervised you in an internship. The thesis advisor must be qualified in your topic area and should have a significant interest in the field; the advisor must also be willing to work closely with you. See **APPENDIX F** for advice about finding an advisor and maintaining a sound working relationship. **APPENDIX G** explains the formation and operation of your Committee and provides a copy of the Committee Membership Form.

Once you have determined your topic and found your research advisor, the next step is to refine your research plan. The questions that you plan to address will eventually need to be refined and developed into clear hypotheses and ultimately a thesis statement. Be prepared to make constant adjustments to your research plan as you gather more information and begin writing. You will also want to find out if the research materials you need are available. One of the obvious places to look is the library. You will need to consider three major questions:

1. Do enough quality sources on the topic exist?
2. If quality sources exist, can you get them?
3. If you can get them, can you use them?

With most topics, sufficient material exists but some topics that are extremely new, specialized, obscure, or localized may have little written about them. Quality sources such as articles, books, or interviews provide reliable and current information about the topic and/or a useful conceptual framework for relating various elements of your topic. You must judge the quality of your sources by critically assessing their reliability and their relevance to your topic.

## TIME-LINES AND DEADLINES

Time is vitally important in all aspects of the thesis work, and an effective time-management program must be developed and adhered to in order to assure the timely completion of the many tasks involved in writing a thesis. One of the purposes of the thesis requirement is to provide you with an opportunity to develop time-management skills that are important to success in any line of work.

The Poster Session provides a checkpoint in the process to ensure you are making satisfactory progress toward completing your thesis. The Poster Session Reception is held each fall and spring semester. **Students registered in HON 498H are required to prepare a visual representation of their thesis work-in-process.** The posters will be displayed to the campus community giving Department Honors students the opportunity to share their research with Deans, Associate Deans, faculty members and colleagues. No formal oral presentation is required. Instead you will be asked to introduce your topic and invite the audience to review your poster where you will be available for more in-depth discussions.

Deadlines must be established for the completion of several sequential and overlapping tasks. Such deadlines must be realistic and, once set, are not subject to alteration except in response to extraordinary circumstances. Dealing with deadlines is an experience in self-discipline. How you manage your time and deal with its attendant pressures will determine the quality of your experience in doing the thesis work.

Be sure to budget more than enough time for each stage of the project and to seek help from your advisor or the Honors College whenever you need it. Keep in mind that each phase of the project will take longer than you expect or hope it will take. See **APPENDIX H** for the HON 498/HON499 time-line. Note that final presentation **must take place no later than two weeks before the end of the semester.**

## BUDGETS AND WORD PROCESSING

While this project is not likely to be a costly one, you should at least recognize that you might incur some expenses. A budget is part of any research plan, and like any researcher, you will have some costs in producing your thesis. As you develop your intellectual agenda, you will want to consider as well the costs of carrying it out.

You will probably incur expenses in conducting the research. You may choose to print or photocopy many journal articles or government publications. You may need to buy books, purchase reports from the government, or buy some other materials. You may need to interview an expert by long-distance phone. You may need to cover travel expenses to use a library or an archive somewhere else, or to conduct field observations at a research site. For those in the sciences, engineering, clinical practice or many areas of the social sciences, considerable financial demands may accompany your project. If this is the case, you should carefully discuss these needs with your mentor(s) to be sure you have the resources to complete your work.

The Honors College will help you to keep your actual costs to a minimum by assisting with some of the expenses associated with producing your final documents. The Honors College will make three copies of your thesis, one for the Honors College and two for you (you should give a copy to your advisor). The final copy will be presented to Special Collection in the Lied Library. You may want additional copies to include in a portfolio of your work that you show to prospective employers or for family members. You may also choose to make more copies for other people who have contributed substantially to your research. Thus, you will have photocopying and binding costs.

Word processing may be a budget consideration as well as a procedural one. Using a computer or word processor will certainly make life easier for you as work on your project, especially as you enter the final stages of revision. The Honors College, as well as the University, has any number of computers available to you. The Computing Services office on campus offers workshops in the use of computers for creating tables, charts, ect. You should select a machine and software appropriate to your project. See **APPENDIX I** for a discussion of the value of word processing.

## THESIS FORMAT

In every field, professional communications such as journal articles and grant proposals adhere to certain specific conventions. These conventions vary in detail from field to field, and indeed between subfields or kinds of communication within a field. Nevertheless, they govern every professional communication, and this thesis is no exception.

You will be expected to follow the rules and conventions appropriate to the field in which you are working. Your advisor will be able to help you in this area. See **APPENDIX J** for a description of typical divisions in a major paper. A sample title page is also included in **APPENDIX J**. No matter the field of your thesis, your title page should adhere to this sample.

## DATA COLLECTION AND INITIAL DATA ANALYSIS

A project the size of the honors thesis sometimes feels overwhelming. To avoid this feeling, you need to stay focused on the task at hand. Once you have articulated a research question, chosen an advisor, and formulated a plan and a budget, you may be tempted to continue tinkering with the plan. Because of fear, frustration, or avoidance, you may be tempted to refine the plan, redirect it, or even dump it altogether and start over. Some rethinking may be necessary, but you may also be avoiding the threatening aspects of entering a new phase of the project. Every stage of this thesis process, whether it is research design, data collection, data analysis, or writing, is likely to feel at least a little threatening when you first encounter it. Unfamiliar and difficult phases of a project are often formidable. Remaining at the stage where you have been working for awhile is much more comfortable than advancing into the unknown and untried. Wanting to stay with the familiar and avoid the difficulties of the new is normal, but you need to find a way to let go and press forward.

### Special Library Privileges

Students who are registered for HON 498 H or HON 499 H are allowed to check out books for a semester at a time. This privilege is provided to help students work efficiently on their projects and is the same library privilege extended to graduate students at UNLV.

### Data Collection

Some of your data will come from print sources such as articles, books, or government publications. See **APPENDIX K** for a discussion of primary and secondary sources as well as a review of some useful research tools. Different researchers collect data from these sources in different ways. Some make note cards; others photocopy everything they find. Others make notes in a notebook or type quotations and summaries into computer files.

Use whatever system works for you. You will, however, want to make sure that your notes or files are labeled by title or topic so you can retrieve the appropriate material when you need it later. This feature is important during the honors thesis project, but will prove even more important in later work when you have bigger projects or more of them going at once.

Your notes or files need to be clearly marked with all the reference data, so you can cite your sources accurately without having to retrace your steps unnecessarily in the library. Accuracy in your references, especially page references for each quotation, is crucial.

Other data may come from activities such as interviews, surveys, field observations, or experiments. Each of these methods has its own protocols for recording citations; make sure that you know the standard ways for capturing data if you undertake any of these methods. Your advisor can explain data collection methods or refer you to appropriate sources and models. While you are engaged in data collection, you will probably find it useful to keep a separate notebook, a separate column in your notebook, or a separate computer file for recording your

reactions, thoughts, feelings, questions, ideas, tentative interpretations, and any other reflections you have on the data collection process and the information you are gathering. Such a record can become an invaluable source of insights and commentary that can contribute to the structure or writing of your thesis.

### **Initial Data Analysis**

After you have collected a substantial amount of data and reflected on the material, read through all your notes, records, and reflections. You will want to mull this material over, looking for elements that interest you or emerging patterns. Always write down your thoughts and insights; even a good word or phrase may help you later. Free writing for a short period of time is also a useful means to generate ideas.

From this point on, you will be moving in a kind of spiral from data collection to data analysis and back to data collection again. Patterns you see associations that will lead you to new questions, and you will likely be driven to collect different information in order to test a hunch or explore a relationship. Analyzing your new data will lead you to tentative conclusions and probably require that you collect more data to see if your conclusions are valid. This process will probably continue throughout the project, right up to the final paragraph you write.

### **Documenting Sources**

The fundamental rule in documentation is to indicate clearly what material you are using from a source and to provide enough information to allow readers to find that source themselves. See **APPENDIX L** for further discussion of the proper use and documentation of sources.

The second rule in documentation is to use the appropriate format. There is no one right format; there are only formats which have been agreed upon in particular situations. Formats vary between fields, within fields, and from journal to journal. You will want to discuss the issue of format with your advisor. It is valuable for you to have an APA or MLA manual or both. If you cannot afford it, the Honors College has several copies you can use.

### **Footnotes and Endnotes**

You must avoid plagiarism. Plagiarism is the use of another author's exact words without attribution. This is a serious form of academic dishonesty that will not be tolerated in the Honors College. Please see Appendix L for guidance in these matters.

## GRAPHICS

While much of any thesis will consist of the words you write, often a strong thesis will also make careful use of visual elements, recognizing that we process information visually as well as verbally. Visual tools can be as simple as white space on a page, setting off an indented list, or indicating the breaks between sections of a chapter. **Illustrations** are more complex tools, divided into two categories and labeled as such: information (whether numbers or other kinds of data) organized into an array of rows and columns are called a **table**; any other illustration (a map, photograph, drawing, histogram, line graph or any other kind of chart) is called a **figure**. Illustrations can present data more economically than mere words, can show relationships more clearly, and can show the essence of complex data precisely and clearly.

Organizing your data visually is useful not just for your readers; it can also help you make sense of what you have found. In fact, many scholars begin writing by constructing their tables and figures. Once they know what their graphics show, they can figure out what else they need to say.

If you reproduce an illustration from a source, if you adapt an illustration from a source, or if you create your own graphic using data from a source, your illustration must include a full reference to the source in your list of references at the end of the thesis.

**Graphics are also useful in support of your oral presentation. They may be in the form of slides, transparencies shown on an overhead projector, or PowerPoint.** Often, however, you will need to redesign for your oral presentation the graphics you produced for your thesis. Tables and figures presented in the text are often more complicated than similar graphics presented to an audience; readers have more time than members of an audience to study illustrations and interpret them. Graphics in your presentation must be simple enough (and large enough) to be seen and interpreted quickly by viewers in the back of the room. Do not flood your audience with visuals; no more than one image per minute is a good rule.

## WRITING

You may find that each stage of this thesis project is hard to start and hard to leave behind when the time to go on to the next stage arrives. That feeling is normal for a research project of this scope. Cleaning the bathroom, for instance, may suddenly seem more urgent than tackling the computerized indexes in the library. This trepidation often occurs when it is time for writing. Collecting more data is a particularly seductive distraction from sitting down to write; researchers can easily justify the need for more information.

For many of us, writing is an activity filled with conflict. It may feel like a performance that we are in danger of failing. Although we have written successfully enough in our academic lives to bring us this far, we may have vivid experiences in our past where our writing failed to meet a teacher's expectations and we never understood why. When we write, we may feel exposed on the page, vulnerable to criticism without being present to defend ourselves. This feeling can stop us from writing, especially about something that is as important to us and demanding as this thesis project. Or to protect ourselves from that feeling of vulnerability, we may distance ourselves emotionally from the writing we do, divesting ourselves so we feel we do not care what happens to it. This emotional state, which Marx might analyze as the alienation of the worker from his or her work, makes it extremely hard to sustain the energy needed to actually write a document of the length you will need to write for your thesis.

You may find, therefore, that the work of writing this thesis reveals a complex set of feelings and perceptions that you have about writing and about yourself as a writer, and you may need some specific tools or strategies to get yourself started or keep yourself going. See **APPENDIX M** for some advice about strategies for overcoming obstacles to writing.

On the other hand, writing is, for most of us, the best way to crystallize ideas in a form that demonstrates comprehension and to communicate with an interested reader. Writing sometimes can sometimes on an energetic momentum of creativity and excitement; cherish those moments! However, it is always good to go back to your narrative (usually after a period away from the text) to check to see if your enthusiasm has taken you beyond ideas or views that can be sustained (and ultimately defended) as part of your project.

## EDITING

After you have written and revised your draft of a major section, you will want to edit it carefully. You will want to attend first to those things that most affect readers, that determine how they will work their way through your document or find what they need to know. Review the titles of the entire thesis and of individual chapters to determine if they convey precisely what the section contains. Make sure that captions of illustrations, headings, and sub-headings are appropriate and that introductions introduce what you actually wrote. Conclusions should move beyond restating the thesis and the points made in the body of the paper. Only after you have fixed what you can at these levels do you move on to things that carry less weight with readers.

Edit for precision. Make sure that your writing says what you intend it to say. Remember that brevity is always a virtue. You do not want to waste your readers' time. Be concise; prune wordiness ruthlessly. If you can make your point in fewer words, do it.

Your final presentation copy should be as close to perfect as humanly possible. See **APPENDIX N** for layout and format specifications. Clean up every surface error; produce a draft worthy of a professional presentation. Read every page carefully to catch grammatical mistakes, typos or misspellings, and punctuation errors. You may want to persuade a friend who is skilled in these areas to help you clean up your copy. Errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling do not usually interfere in communicating your meaning, but they do have a powerful impact on your credibility as a writer, especially in professional communication situations. Errors of this sort carry a social and professional stigma: many readers see them as the mark of a careless writer and a careless thinker.

## WRITING AN ABSTRACT

The abstract of your thesis will probably be the most widely read part of your whole thesis. The abstract will be read by other students, by faculty, and by those interested in researching your topic. Therefore, it is crucial to write the abstract well.

An abstract tells your readers the essence of your thesis in 100-200 words. The abstract should contain the title of the thesis and your full name; state briefly the research problem, question, or hypothesis; describe the methods and procedures used in gathering information or studying the problem; and give a condensed summary of the findings and recommendations of your study.

Most readers of abstracts are looking for documents that are relevant to their own research; thus they will skim your abstract among many others. As you write the abstract, keep in mind the rapidly reading researchers skimming for materials relevant to their projects; identify your topic, research ideas and methods, and conclusions clearly and precisely by using key words.

The abstract is not the place to tell about your experience writing the thesis, your uncertainties, struggles, and successes or failures; if you want to talk about your own process, put it in a separate preface or use it to explain the help of the people you thank in your acknowledgments section.

Although every word in your entire thesis should be carefully chosen, the limited space of the abstract accentuates the importance of being precise and concise.

While the abstract appears at the front of your thesis, you should write it last. Only after you have written the thesis can you hope to view it in its larger perspective.

## **DISTRIBUTING YOUR RESEARCH RESULTS**

As you approach the end of your Departmental Honors thesis, you can congratulate yourself on your accomplishment. You have developed a measure of expertise that you can share with a wider range of people. This process of distributing research results is the justification for society supporting research institutions like ours. Here are at least three ways you can distribute your findings:

- 1) You will probably want to have a copy to show to potential employers. It shows what you have learned and demonstrates the skills used to accomplish this research process.
- 2) Depending on your topic, you may be able to identify local organizations or individuals who could use your findings and who would want a copy of the thesis.
- 3) A range of publications might be interested in publishing your thesis in its entirety or excerpted, condensed, or revised. Your advisor may be able to suggest several appropriate possibilities for publication.

As you finish your thesis, you may feel that it is less like a neatly wrapped package and more like a house full of spaghetti, with strands leading off in every direction. That is a normal feeling at the end of a major research project. Most projects of this nature feel like they have been untimely ripped from the author. Actually you have developed an understanding of an issue in such depth and detail that you see how it is connected to many other issues, and therefore multiple paths for further investigation have unfolded before you. Perhaps the most important consequence of your research project is the effect it has on you as it pushes you down some of those paths in the future. If so, we wish you well as you continue your inquiries.

## APPENDIX A

### APPLICATION FOR DEPARTMENT HONORS

**Please Print or Type**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

First

Middle

Last

Local

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Street

Apt. #

City

State

Zip Code

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ SS# \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsoring Department \_\_\_\_\_

[This is the department that houses the faculty member writing letters of recommendation as well as the faculty advisor with whom you will work on your project; it is normally the department of your major]

Major at UNLV \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you want to participate in Department Honors? \_\_\_\_\_

What are some possible topics you are considering for your thesis/project? \_\_\_\_\_

Expected Graduation Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Return this completed form to:**

Honors Application Manager - The Honors College

BOX 457003

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Las Vegas, NV 89154-7003

## APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Go to: *honors.unlv.edu* or use the application attached.

Send or have sent the items listed below to:

Honors Application Manager  
The Honors College  
Box 457003  
University of Nevada, Las Vegas  
Las Vegas, NV 89154-7003

**NOTE: Before completing this application it is important that you make an appointment with the Dean or Associate Dean of the Honors College to discuss your plans!**

### I. Application process for current UNLV students:

1. The completed application form
2. A reference letter from a full-time faculty member of the sponsoring department (the department of your major).
3. A letter of endorsement from the chair of the sponsoring department. This ensures department support for the senior project.
4. A paper written recently for an academic class.

### II. Application process for students transferring to UNLV.

1. The completed application form.
2. Transcripts of **all** your college work.
3. A reference letter from a full-time faculty member familiar with your work preferably from a faculty from your major department).
4. A paper written recently for an academic class.

Please note that the **Proposal for Honors Project** form is not due until your junior year but it must be handed in before you register for HON 498H.

## APPENDIX B

### APPROVAL TO SUBSTITUTE A DEPARTMENT INDEPENDENT STUDY OR SENIOR PROJECT FOR HON 498H THESIS/PROJECT

The requirements to graduate with Department Honors include the completion of a 6-credit Honors Senior Thesis/Project. HON 498H is intended to provide three credits for the research phase of the thesis/project. HON 498H may be replaced by an equivalent 3-or-more-credit course from the department sponsoring the honors thesis/project. This substitution is allowed as long as the department course meets the requirements of HON 498H. Your signature indicates that the proposed Honors Thesis/Project is a continuation of the work submitted under your supervision and forms the foundation for HON 499H, the second half of the honors thesis/project.

1. Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Class ID, Call Number and Title of Course replacing HON 498:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
  - a) Grade Received: \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) Credits Received: \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) Semester Completed: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Proposed Title of Honors Thesis/Project:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Name and Department of Advisor of the Course Listed Above:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Campus phone: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Signature of Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Signature of Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ NOTE:

Your signature confirms that the work completed in this course will be used as the foundation for your HON 499 senior honors thesis/project.

**Please return the completed form to the Honors College, 7003**

## APPENDIX C

### PUBLIC PRESENTATION AND ORAL EXAMINATION

The oral presentation or reading is a public address performed before an audience of interested students, invited guests, the Dean or Associate Dean of the Honors College, and committee members. Your advisor will introduce you to the audience. This presentation should last 20-30 minutes and be followed by an opportunity for the audience to ask questions. After 5-20 minutes of questions, your advisor will excuse the audience and you will meet with your committee members and the Dean or Associate Dean of the Honors College.

Projects emphasizing the creative or performing arts rather than traditional academic endeavors must also include a public presentation and oral examination. Obviously the nature of the project will dictate the type of presentation, but the presentation and oral examination process remains the same.

At the conclusion of the examination, the committee will consider the quality of your honors thesis/project, public presentation, and examination and then reach a consensus about your grade for HON 499H. Only students who receive an A will be eligible for *summa cum laude*.

A copy of the HON 499H Presentation and Final Examination Scheduling Form appears on the next page.

**HONORS COLLEGE****HON 499H PRESENTATION AND FINAL EXAMINATION SCHEDULING FORM**

Please send this form to the Honors College Office at least two weeks before the scheduled date of the final examination.

\_\_\_\_\_ is scheduled to present the results of his/her Senior Honors Project entitled: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**The final examination** will be held at the following date, time, and place:

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

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Honors Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**FINAL EXAMINATION FOR HON 499H**

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

The final examination of \_\_\_\_\_

A Candidate for Department Honors in \_\_\_\_\_

was conducted on \_\_\_\_\_.

Thesis/Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**\*Final Grade for HON 499H** \_\_\_\_\_

Signatures:

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

Committee  
Member \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Committee  
Member \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Honors  
College \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Not to be assigned until **all** requirements are met.

## APPENDIX D

### GUIDELINES FOR HON 498H & 499H

The honors thesis/project is required for all students participating in Department Honors. It is directed by a Faculty Advisor selected by the student. The six credits for completing the Honors thesis are divided equally between two courses, HON 498H and HON 499H. These courses are generally taken during the fall and spring semesters of the student's senior year.

#### **HON 498H**

HON 498H is offered only with the S/F grading option. Students who have been accepted into the Department Honors must complete their proposal for the Honors thesis/project and submit it to the Honors College **before** registering for HON 499H.

Once enrolled in HON 498H, students must complete a Committee Membership Form by the end of the second week of semester. The committee should consist of the Faculty Advisor and two committee members. For the rest of the semester the student focuses on doing the research phase of the thesis project (see Honors Thesis Timeline attached to the Proposal for Honors Form). The Faculty Advisor will turn in a grade to the Honors College at the end of the semester.

It is a requirement of HON 498H that all students enrolled in this course must meet, as a group, with the Associate Dean of Honors. These meetings will take place during the second and sixth weeks of the semester. It is also a requirement of HON 498H that students participate in a Poster Session during the semester in which they are enrolled in HON 498H. At this Poster Session students present a visual representation of his or her thesis/project as a work-in-progress.

#### **HON 499H**

HON 499H is offered with the regular grading option. The student's Faculty Advisor, in consultation with the committee, will assign a grade for HON 499H and each member of the committee will sign the Final Examination for HON 499H Form.

Students must complete the following four requirements by the last day of finals in order to receive a passing grade on HON 499H:

1. Complete a thesis/project.
2. Complete a HON 499H Presentation and Final Examination Scheduling Form and submit it to the Honors College office at least one week before the scheduled presentation. The student will invite the Advisor, committee members and representatives of the Honors College.
3. Complete an oral presentation about the results of your thesis/project. The presentation lasts approximately 20-30 minutes with time afterwards for questions. After the

presentation, you will be asked questions by the members of your committee and/or other audience members. This constitutes the oral examination. **[See the Notes at the bottom of the Timeline page for deadlines and responsibilities.]**

4. Submit one unbound final copy of the thesis/project to the Honors College Office two weeks prior to the end of the semester.



## EVALUATION OF PROPOSAL FOR HONORS THESIS/PROJECT

To Faculty Advisor: This statement is meant to provide the Honors Council with information that will be used to evaluate the quality and feasibility of your student's proposal for an Honors Project. It also provides a record of the endorsement of this project by your Department Chair and Dean.

To Department Chair and Dean: Please indicate your approval or disapproval of this project in the appropriate place (Section III and IV, respectively).

Name of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

### **I. Advisor's evaluation of the project**

1. Are the objectives of this project well defined and obtainable by the Procedures proposed?

2. In your opinion, is the project sufficiently challenging to qualify as Honors work?

3. Estimate how long it will take to complete the work and how many hrs/wk he or she will need to commit to it.
4. What portions of the project are the student's original ideas?
5. What is the value of the project to the student?
6. Do you have any reservations about the ability of this particular student to do the proposed work?

## **II. Advisor's agreement to supervise work**

1. Describe the extent and conditions of the supervision that you will provide.
2. How do you intend to evaluate this project? You must submit grade for this student when his or her work is completed.
3. Do you recommend that the six credits of HON 498H and 499H count as elective credits in your Department?

Advisor's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_ Department \_\_\_\_\_

**(Please forward this form to the Chair of your Department.)**

**III. Department Chair's Approval**

1. Can the six credits received, upon satisfactory completion of this project, count as elective credits in your Department? **(See advisor's recommendation II.3 above)**

Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

2. Elective credits aside, do you endorse the student's undertaking of this project?

Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Department Chair Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**IV. Dean's Approval**

Do you endorse the student's undertaking of this project?

Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dean Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Please return the original of this form to The Honors College, Lied  
Library room 3270, mail code 7003)**

## APPENDIX F

### FINDING AN ADVISOR

Considerable groundwork must be done before you can register for HON 498H. Once you have decided on one or more potential topic areas, then you are ready to interview potential advisors. Talking to more than one person will be useful in helping you to determine if a given topic is feasible and if this person would be both qualified and willing to work with you. Your decision about a topic should be worked out as you talk with potential advisors. As you discuss general areas of interest with potential advisors, they can tell you how they could help you, suggest sources and lines of inquiry, and help you focus and define the problem.

Having an interesting topic may not be sufficient; you still need to find someone who is both qualified and willing to serve as your advisor. If no one is willing to work with you on your project, then you need to postpone your work on that fascinating idea. Remember that you are negotiating to establish the relationship that may well determine the success of your thesis. Thus the search for an advisor warrants considerable time and effort.

At the beginning stage the advisor can offer encouragement and information about useful sources and provide guidance toward specific problems in your topic area that need investigation. The advisor may also help you to select an appropriate research methodology. As you develop your research plan, the advisor can critique your ideas by asking critical questions, alert you to potential difficulties, and help you to narrow the problem you are trying to solve. As you gather information, you can talk with your advisor about how the information coheres and what it means. Obviously, your advisor will comment on written drafts once you are in the writing phase of the project.

As a thesis researcher, you are asking for valuable time from an advisor whose responsibility is to offer guidance in formulating your topic, in designing a strategy for collecting data and finding resources, and in analyzing your conclusions. Busy professionals and scholars are willing to invest time and energy in you and your topic because they share common interests with you. What you propose to work on will benefit the advisor as well as you: your work will feed your advisor's scholarly or professional interest. Your thesis work may even contribute to your advisor's scholarly endeavors.

Even if your thesis work does not make such specific contributions to the advisor, your interaction can offer the advisor new information and new insights. A successful relationship with an advisor will help you both. You will want to ask your potential advisors how they can help you and how your work on this topic will benefit them.

Keep in mind that most faculty members, like students, are particularly interested in endeavors that are academically challenging and ambitious. Despite this interest, you must recognize that some people will neither have the time to work with you, nor see enough benefit for themselves. Faculty members are busy; they may well turn you down. In any case, you have the right to explore the possibility with them as well as to ask whether someone is willing to become your advisor. Faculty members, for instance, are required to hold office hours; that is certainly an

appropriate time to discuss their serving as your advisor. Likewise, that you have spoken with someone about serving as your advisor does not commit you to them: you have the right to decide that someone you have interviewed is not the person you want as an advisor.

Before you make an appointment with a potential advisor, make sure that you have ideas to discuss. Plan an agenda. Focus potential topics into two or three written research questions. You will learn more and have a better chance of convincing the person to serve as your advisor if you demonstrate a serious effort to prepare for the interview. This interview is also an opportunity for you to demonstrate your initiative and responsibility for the project.

Because faculty members go on leave and have commitments that make them unavailable for particular blocks of time, you will need to make sure that the advisor will be available through the entire thesis process.

**Your advisor will provide scholarly guidance, but you must remember that you are responsible for initiating contact, for seeking advice, and for bringing in progress reports and drafts of chapters.** Because the purpose of a thesis requirement is to help you develop the ability to do independent scholarly work, the margin between success and failure of the thesis is at least partially the amount of initiative and responsibility for independent work that you assume.

## APPENDIX G

### THE COMMITTEE

Your advisor will serve as chair of the committee to help you with and evaluate your honors thesis/project. With the help of your advisor, you will choose two other full-time faculty members to serve on this committee. By the end of the second month of the semester in which you are registered for HON 498, you should submit a Committee Membership Form indicating that this person has agreed to serve on your committee. The Associate Dean of the Honors College will function as a fourth member of the committee.

The student's advisor will act as chair of the committee, which will function much like a thesis committee. Members of the committee are responsible for reading and responding to the thesis/project and evaluating the student's work, public presentation, and oral examination. The committee will determine the grade for HON 499H, and all members will sign off on it. Students who receive a grade of A are eligible to graduate *summa cum laude*; of course, an A grade is not automatic.

A copy of the FINAL EXAMINATION FOR HON 499H form can be found in **APPENDIX G**. After all of your work has been submitted and evaluated, this form must be signed by your committee and returned to the Honors College in order for you to receive a grade for HON 499H.

**COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP FORM  
HONORS THESIS/PROJECT (HON 498H & 499H)**

1. Student's Name Date

2. Title of Honors Thesis/Project

3. Name and Department of Advisor (please print)

---

Print Name

---

Signature

4. Name and Department of Committee Member (please print)

a.

---

Name

b.

---

Department

Please sign this sheet if you agree to and are willing to serve on the committee helping with and evaluating this student's honors thesis/project.

Committee Members' Signatures

---

Signature

Date

---

Signature

Date

**Please complete and return this form to the Honors College.  
(Mail stop 7003).**

## APPENDIX H

### HONORS THESIS TIMELINE (*Generic; see HC Staff for your 498/499 year*)

<u>HON 498H</u>	<u>Completed Stage in Process</u>
2 <sup>nd</sup> semester sophomore 2 <sup>nd</sup> semester junior	Submit application for Dept. honors Submit proposal for Honors Project Register for HON 498H
1 <sup>st</sup> semester senior end of 2 <sup>nd</sup> week	Committee Membership Form to HC Meet with Associate Dean of Honors*
1 <sup>st</sup> semester senior end of 6 <sup>th</sup> week	Meet with Associate Dean of Honors*
1 <sup>st</sup> semester senior end of 10 <sup>th</sup> week	First draft to advisor or drop HON 498 Participate in Poster Session
1 <sup>st</sup> semester senior end of 14 <sup>th</sup> week	First revision to advisor
1 <sup>st</sup> semester senior end of 16 <sup>th</sup> week	Grade of S or F submitted to HC by advisor
<b><u>HON 499H</u></b> 1 <sup>st</sup> semester senior early registration	Register for HON 499H
2 <sup>nd</sup> semester senior end of 3 <sup>rd</sup> week	Prepare for 1 <sup>st</sup> revision with advisor for submission to committee
2 <sup>nd</sup> semester senior end of 6 <sup>th</sup> week	Submit 1 <sup>st</sup> revision to committee
2 <sup>nd</sup> semester senior end of 10 <sup>th</sup> week	Final meeting with advisor to review suggested revisions or drop HON 499H
2 <sup>nd</sup> semester senior end of 11 <sup>th</sup> week	Final Exam Schedule Form to HC
2 <sup>nd</sup> semester senior end of 12 <sup>th</sup> week	Abstract and Thesis Submission Form
2 <sup>nd</sup> semester senior end of 13 <sup>th</sup> week	Final revision of manuscript to HC <b>Final presentation must have taken place</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup> semester senior end of 14 <sup>th</sup> week	Public presentation and exam

#### NOTES

1. The student must schedule his/her thesis presentation with the Honors College two weeks before the presentation date. It is the student's responsibility to contact their advisor, committee members, and the Honors College to schedule their presentation.
2. The student must turn in a copy of their thesis paper to their advisor, committee members, and the Honors College at least one week before their final presentation. A FINAL copy must be turned in to Honors before the student can receive a grade.
3. The final presentation must take place no later than two weeks before the end of the semester

## APPENDIX I

### WORD PROCESSING

To efficiently write a thesis today requires a working familiarity with computers and a word processing application such as Microsoft Word or Corel WordPerfect. With all professional writing, your thesis will go through multiple drafts in which you reshape and polish much of your work. A word processing application produces a clean copy after each revision without requiring you to go through the tedious work of retyping it each time.

We have no preference concerning the program and machine you use. You will, however, want to make sure that the program and machine meet several fundamental requirements. First, the machine must be accessible to you throughout the time you are working on the thesis. Secondly, your computer system must also be able to produce letter-quality printouts from a laser or an inkjet printer. Almost every word processing application has a spell and grammar check. Use these before you distribute your drafts.

Word processing applications are marvelous work savers, but they do have a down side. Periodically someone reports that the computer crashed or the file became corrupt. This occurrence will not excuse you from meeting any deadlines. To insure your thesis paper is not destroyed or corrupted, you will want to take a simple precaution: back-up your thesis paper to a floppy or high capacity removable disk. If the computer crashes, you can always retrieve a copy from the backed-up disk. Remember, a back up is only valuable to the user if the user is diligent in backing up the file on a regular basis.

Protect your disks by keeping them away from magnetic fields. Keep the disks physically secure in a carrying case and protected from the elements.

Take advantage of the various software programs available on the market. Graphic applications like Adobe PhotoShop or Corel Draw will help you create and edit professional graphics for presentations or paper enhancements. Spreadsheets, such as Microsoft Excel or Corel Quattro Pro, allow the user to place data in a table and then convert it into a graphic chart such as histograms, pie charts or linear graphs. Digital presentations like Microsoft PowerPoint or Corel Presentation allow students to outline their thesis project (not to mention a great tool to use for the Oral Presentation).

Take advantage of the Lloyd Katz Honors Lounge, which has plenty of computers, the latest software, and laser printers.

## APPENDIX J

### MAJOR DIVISIONS IN A PAPER

The following divisions of a major paper are applicable to writings in most disciplines:

**Title Page:** This page typically contains at least the following information: the title of your thesis, your name, your major, your advisor's name, the names of your committee members, and the date of completion. The title page is one of the most important features of any professional document because readers use titles to decide which documents are likely to be relevant to their own particular research or needs, and therefore which documents are worth retrieving for further examination. Your title may be the very last thing you write: it may not be jazzy or elegant, but it needs to be precise and comprehensive about what your thesis covers. A sample title page is part of this appendix.

**Abstract:** Your abstract should begin with a definitive statement of the problem or project. Its purpose, scope and limit should be clearly delineated. Then, as concisely as possible, describe research methods and design, major findings, including the significance of the work, if appropriate, and conclusions.

Students whose thesis involves "creative" work (original, fine art, music, writing, theatre or film production, dance, etc.) should describe process and production, indicating the forms of documentation on file as "thesis" material.

Please have your advisor review your abstract for organization, content, grammar and spelling before submission. A sample abstract is part of this appendix.

**Acknowledgments:** Virtually no scholarly work is done by an individual working totally alone. All of us draw on others and are influenced by them as we research and write. Perhaps an experience in earlier life predisposed us to work on a given topic, perhaps an article we read or a lecture we heard organized a problem for us crisply and clearly, perhaps conversations with advisors or friends helped clear the mud from our thoughts, perhaps some organization supplied us with funding that enabled us to do our work. Whatever the contributions we received, this section allows us to acknowledge them.

**Table of Contents:** This shows the major sections and subsections of the document and the page number on which each begins. It will be one of the last sections you finish, so you can provide accurate pagination for all of the other sections. A sample table of contents is part of this appendix.

**Table of Illustrations:** This lists each table and figure in your thesis, by table or figure number and by title, and gives the page number on which each is found. Like the Table of Contents, it will be one of the last tasks you complete.

**Introduction:** In this chapter you define your problem or issue and show why it is worth pursuing. Often this section discusses the context of your issue.

**Major Sections:** The chapters following the introduction will be divided into the major blocks of thought articulated in the thesis.

**References or Works Cited:** Following immediately after the last chapter of text, this section contains the full bibliographic data for every source cited in the text or illustrations. Only those sources cited in the thesis itself should be included. If a source was useful to you, cite it in the text and put it in the references; if it was not useful, do not put it in either one. Your advisor will be able to help you follow the style appropriate to your discipline. Use either an APA or MLA citation style.

**Appendices:** The Appendix or Appendices contain those items which you feel might be valuable for someone using your thesis, but which are either too lengthy or too peripheral to embed directly in the text. Examples might include a policy statement, a questionnaire you developed, the transcript of an interview you conducted, or other supporting material.

ON THE METRIC OF THE DISCRETE HEISENBERG GROUP

Daniel Corral  
Mathematical Sciences  
April 21, 2005

Honors Thesis Committee

Corran Webster, Advisor  
Ebrahim Salehi  
Zhonghai Ding

ABSTRACT

Ellis Island: The Public and Personal Representations  
of the Immigrant Experience

by

Tara Maras

Between 1892 and 1954, more than 12 million immigrants arrived at Ellis Island's shores for the promise of a new beginning in America. During this period of immigrant influx and in the decades to follow, anti-immigrant sentiment remained at the forefront of the collective American conscious, varying in severity, though ever present. This study compares the relationship between the personal stories of immigrants and the print media's account of immigration in Ellis Island's peak year, 1907, in an attempt to understand how storytelling, as communication, helped shape the collective immigrant experience. It also examines how the relationship contributes to U.S. perceptions of immigrants. The study is informed by Walter Fisher's narrative paradigm theory and was accomplished through a qualitative narrative analysis of both immigrant related articles published in 1907 New York Times articles and the archival artifacts on record at the Ellis Island Immigration Museum.

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## APPENDIX K

### PRIMARY VS. SECONDARY SOURCES

Sources can be divided into two types: primary sources and secondary sources. You will draw on both. **Primary sources** are the raw data that scholars use. You may generate some of your own primary material--results of a survey you conduct, for example, or the transcript of an interview you carry out, or notes from experiments that you perform. You will also find primary material collected in the library and in other places such as an organization's files or an archive. Examples of such sources would be census data, statistical data collected by government agencies, historical documents, and original manuscripts such as letters, novels, poems, or plays.

**Secondary sources** are perhaps more familiar to you. These have already passed through the filters of an investigator's mind; they are analyses or syntheses of primary material. A report on the trends of acid rain over the last decade is one example; most journal articles and scholarly books would be classified as secondary sources. Secondary sources establish relationships and offer conceptual frameworks for interpreting their data; they can help you better understand and interpret the information you get from primary sources. Part of your responsibility in doing this project is becoming familiar with the secondary material so that you do not duplicate the efforts and work that have already been done in the field.

#### Sources in Print

Many of your sources will be printed publications, and these can be divided into at least four types: reference works, popular sources, scholarly material, and government publications. **Reference works** may be a good place to start. For example, the library contains many specialized encyclopedias, such as the Encyclopedia of Environmental Control Technology or the Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential. You can probably locate articles in one or more of these specialized encyclopedias that relate to your probable thesis topic. From the article you can get an overview of issues to consider, perhaps the names of organizations or individuals who play important roles in relation to your topic; a sketch of relevant history, technology, or economics; and almost always a list of references for further study. Keep in mind, however, that encyclopedias serve you best during the early stages of your research when you seek background material, and not when you are more knowledgeable about your topic.

**Popular sources** (newspapers, magazines, or books written for a large, general audience) may provide some useful information or allow you to track recent developments in your issue. Popular sources, however, must be used judiciously in a scholarly work such as your thesis. Articles, for example, may be written by journalists who do not fully understand the issue about which they are writing, and while the extremely short lag time between the occurrence of an event and the publication of news about the event allows you to get very recent information, it also generally prevents the analysis of context necessary for a fuller understanding.

**A scholarly article or book** is written by someone who studies the issue as part of his or her profession; in addition, it has passed through a quality control process called peer review. This means that before accepting the work for publication, the publisher has sent the manuscript to

other respected members of the author's field, who agree that its methodology is appropriate and its findings are important enough to be worthy of publication. While this process does not guarantee that the article or book is correct, it does increase the likelihood that the work contributes significantly to knowledge in the field. Your thesis needs to be built on a solid foundation of scholarly work.

Scholarly books are typically (but not always) published by university presses (such as the University of California Press) or by groups such as the National Research Council (publishing through the National Academy Press). Scholarly articles appear in scholarly journals (ranging from general journals such as Science or Nature through somewhat more tightly focused journals such as Ecology or PMLA to highly specialized journals such as Journal of Wildlife Management, Eighteenth-Century Studies, or the Annual Review of Entomology. You can tell if a journal is scholarly if it is published by a professional society and if its guidelines for publication include a peer review process. For most thesis topics, scholarly journals will be more important than books because they are more focused and more current.

**Government publications** may include laws and regulations relating to your topic; environmental impact reports or other reports published by local, state, or federal government or by international organizations such as the United Nations; or testimony by experts in Congressional hearings.

One of the best ways to find sources is to read a recent paper in a scholarly journal on your subject of interest. That paper or article will cite other published materials, which you can then locate. Works that are frequently cited are typically important works that you should investigate for yourself. The library has many tools designed to help researchers find the resources they need. Four of the major tools are indexes, abstracts, citation indexes, and the catalogue.

**Indexes** list in alphabetical order subjects, authors and titles of articles from a set of periodicals in a particular field. Examples range from the Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature (for popular magazines) to the Public Affairs Information Service (PAIS) Bulletin (for social science sources) to more specialized indexes such as the Population Index (for articles specifically on population issues).

**Abstracts** are organized much like indexes, dividing their coverage into various subjects and providing author and title citations for articles on each subject. In addition, however, for each citation they provide an abstract or summary (usually 100-200 words) of the key features of the article being cited. This abstract is essentially the same as the abstract you will write for your thesis. Thus by using an abstract (such as Environment Abstracts or Dissertation Abstracts), you can locate not only potential sources but also quickly evaluate them, deciding whether they are likely to be worth the trouble of tracking them down.

**Citation indexes** like the Science Citation Index and the Social Science Citation Index are useful if you have found an excellent source, which are a few years old. The citation index will provide references for all the articles in a wide range of journals that have referred to or cited your source since it was published. Thus you can track the more recent work that has built upon your original source. While the references in articles or books take you back in time to the earlier sources used by the author, the citation index can take you forward in time to later sources that

cite the author.

**The catalogue** is the basic listing of all the books the library owns, all the periodicals to which it subscribes, and most of the other resources it has collected. All acquisitions since 1981 are on the on-line catalogue computer system; earlier works may or may not be on the computer. The on-line catalogues can tell you if the library has a book. Material that the library does not possess can be retrieved through Interlibrary Loan. This process can take from two weeks to several months, depending on the difficulty of access to the source and the volume of other requests waiting to be processed.

Once you find a source, skim it quickly. You might look at the abstract, the figures and tables, the introduction and the conclusion, and the works cited. You need to decide if it is relevant to your topic, if it appears to offer something significant in understanding your topic, and if it is written at a level that you can understand.

Your job during the early stages of your library search is not to absorb everything you read, but simply to find out what is available to you. You are in essence conducting a reconnaissance mission, a preliminary search to help you get a sense of the boundaries to your topic and to make sure that enough material is available for you to proceed. Try to explore briefly as many potential sources and indexing materials as you can. Feel free enough to consider playfully as well as seriously the different directions that your material may be leading you. If you find a useful book, check it out and look up the references it cites. When you find good articles, photocopy them and make sure that you get the full reference. You will certainly want to take advantage of the expertise of the reference librarians; their knowledge of research tools can save you valuable time in locating sources.

## APPENDIX L

### DOCUMENTATION OF SOURCES

Many students are unsure when to cite sources and when not to cite them. You want to give credit where it is due; yet you also want to write your thesis without a citation for each sentence.

A good way to develop a sense of how much to cite and when to cite is to look at the patterns of citation in the journal articles you are reading. The principle followed by scholars working in a field is not to cite anything which is common knowledge within the field; they do cite specific information that comes from particular sources. You want to understand the field within which your thesis is situated well enough to distinguish common knowledge from specific knowledge. Your obligation is, of course, to cite specific knowledge and applications of language or ideas.

For example, when students begin working in a field like environmental studies and take lower-division environmental studies courses, they are introduced to such concepts as ecosystems, environmental unity, and ecological succession. If they attempt at that time to write about those concepts, they might feel obliged to cite the textbook that introduced them to those subjects. By the time they are ready to begin an honors thesis/project, however, they recognize these ideas are widely understood without pinning them to a source. The same principle applies to whatever narrower field the thesis is located within. You can use the common understandings of the field without citing them, even if they are initially new to you and introduced to you through a particular source.

Be sure to cite the following:

**Numbers:** Cite the source of numbers that you did not generate.

**Research results:** If you are discussing the outcome of a particular study, cite the author.

**Particular formulations or conceptualizations:** If you are quoting an author directly, borrowing a particular line of argument, or replicating a particular research methodology, cite your source.

In general, cite sources if you are using material they have originated.

### Using Sources

Using sources is, of course, a much trickier issue than just documenting them. Your thesis will rely heavily on the work of others; all intellectual work does. Your problem is to use the content and language of your sources in the proper way.

Sometimes a thesis writer will discover a source that seems to provide all the information he or she can use; most of the resulting thesis would be based on that source. Or perhaps two or three sources cover different aspects of the issue, so that each chapter rewrites a different source. Such theses would probably be unsuccessful because they reflect inadequate work on the student's part. Relying on a single source is an error because no one source tells the whole story;

often sources disagree about questions of fact and about interpretations of fact. If they do not disagree, they may provide different slants, different contexts, different connections; or they may simply corroborate each other, which in itself is important information. If you only have a single source for a major part of your thesis, you will need to look further and uncover a number of other sources.

In those very rare cases where only one or two sources dealing with your topic exist or in those more common cases where you have been able to find only one or two sources, regardless of how many exist, you will need to reformulate your question to bring other points of view to bear on it. You may need to broaden your question, to examine it as an instance of a larger type. Or you may need to look for analogues in other library locations, references, or data systems. In any case, the thesis must synthesize different sources, bringing them together to shed light on your questions. Your questions and answers constitute the center of your thesis; a good thesis will reflect your mind at work answering, those questions through your sources rather than simply repackaging a good source or two.

Sometimes a student encountering the work of a professional writer will feel the inadequacy of his or her own language. The temptation here is to quote long passages from the source, with or without quotation marks. Resist that temptation. Even if the author said it beautifully, you will learn more in the effort to assimilate the source into your own language.

### **Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing**

There are three ways of using the work of another: direct quotation, paraphrase, and summary. In good research writing, direct quotation is used rarely, only when the language of the source itself is essential for the point you are making. Quoting specific language would be necessary when discussing poetry, a law enumerating a list of activities which are required or prohibited, or a statement by a public figure. Citing a specific passage may also prove valuable when the author's statement is exceptionally clear or powerful.

Short quotations are, of course, enclosed in quotation marks, and they must be embedded within your own sentence. Longer quotations (of more than three lines) should be blocked. The convention of blocking a quotation may vary from discipline to discipline, but generally blocked quotations are indented five or ten spaces and single-spaced. The block indentation indicates that the passage is a quotation; thus quotation marks should not be used.

A paraphrase, which is used a little more often than direct quotation, restates the ideas of the passage in the researcher's own words. By far the most common use of a source, especially in scientific and technical writing, is the summary, which condenses the relevant point into a few words. Often several sources, which converge on the same point, can be summarized in the same sentence.

## APPENDIX M

### STRATEGIES FOR WRITING

**1. Be aware of your feelings about the task and about yourself.** If you feel anxious, tense, frustrated, or whatever, you probably have a good reason why you feel that way. Perhaps the feelings stem from previous experiences with writing. By writing those feelings down, you may be able to see how feelings that are blocking you from proceeding may not really fit the current situation.

**2. Acknowledge that writing is hard and complicated work.** Some people may find writing easy. We do not know any. First-person accounts and research studies of professional writers, including academic writers like your professors, show that they often struggle with their writing, reworking what they have written over and over, making frequent and major changes in it, hitting dry spells. This manual you are reading was pounded out over a period of months, with numerous revisions both large and small. So if writing is hard for you, you have plenty of company.

**3. Start producing before you are ready.** Producing something in writing before you actually feel ready to write is often a good way to get moving, to prime the pump or tap your understanding of your issue. Here are several ways to do this:

**a) Focused "Free writing."** "Free writing" is a technique in which, for a limited period of time (10 or 15 minutes), you write down everything you can think of as fast as you can. If you are a reasonably good typist, do it at the computer; if you are faster with a pen, do it on paper. As a way to approach writing the thesis, you can **focus** a different free write on each of the major issues or concepts with which you will be dealing. Since your goal here is to write quickly rather than carefully, the text you produce will probably not be good enough to put into the thesis. What you write will have value as a first run at articulating what you know, at linking ideas together, and it may serve as a starting point, which you can expand into a section of the thesis.

**b) Teaching your thesis research to a friend.** Sometimes we find words for our ideas much more easily and clearly by talking rather than by writing. If you have a friend who is willing to listen to you and ask you questions, you may find it useful to teach your research to that friend. One useful technique is to compress each proposed chapter into a sentence or two and then to explain that idea more fully. Another useful technique is to take specialized terms that are crucial in your subject area and explain their meaning. As you teach the core ideas of your thesis to your friend, you will probably say things you can then write down. Like the focused free writing above, these are techniques that tap what you already know but have not yet articulated clearly to yourself.

**c) Use a draft/revision process to your advantage.** If you know that most serious writing goes through multiple drafts with multiple revisions, you can focus your energy more usefully. If you start on a paragraph or a section and get hung up trying to get it right, tell yourself that the first draft does not have to be good--it just has to be done. Once you have

written a draft, even if some of the research is incomplete, the ideas unclear, the language fuzzy, you have at least some scaffolding you can expand and modify later. If a particular part becomes frustrating, leave some blank space with a note to yourself in brackets about what you will need to put in there, and go on to the next part that you are prepared to write. You can come back and fill in that part later.

**4. Use your outline but do not be hog-tied by it.** Your outline will divide your thesis into logical chunks and provide a structure for each chunk. As you continue to research, and even as you write, you may find that you need to revise your outline. You may see new issues that you need to include; you may need to frame your issues differently or put them in a different order for greater effectiveness. The outline is a tool to help you generate your document; it should change as your view of the document changes.

**5. Use time to your advantage.** Start writing early enough to have time to get stuck, to misfire, to dump whole sections and start over, and to revise. You should schedule regular writing time for yourself. Generating and maintaining momentum are crucial. You should work in blocks of time that are at least several hours in length, and you should try to do some work, if not every day, then at least several days a week. Whenever a long break in the process of writing a major piece like your thesis occurs, you will need to use some extra time to get back into it, to figure out what you have done and what you need to do next. Maintaining a regular writing schedule will minimize your down time.

**6. Set sub-deadlines for you.** You will have several major deadlines, one for giving a full draft to your advisor and another for handing in the final draft. Working backward from those deadlines and using your outline, set for yourself sub-deadlines for each chapter or section you plan to write. Give yourself a margin of error to cope with unexpected difficulties. Breaking this large task down into manageable chunks and relating those chunks to the time you have available can make the difference between finishing without undue stress or with panicked all-nighters.

**7. Shift modes of thinking.** You will need to shift between various modes or ways of thinking: recognize the difference between playing with ideas and working with them, between generating ideas and judging them. For example, most writers move into a less critical mode when they are brainstorming or generating new material, and into a more critical mode when they are revising and editing older material. Some writers establish a daily rhythm, beginning a writing session by critically revising what they wrote the day before, then consciously shifting to a less critical, more playful frame of mind to produce new material. You may also find yourself shifting your focus. At some times you may be focusing your attention on the topic you are exploring, asking yourself what its elements are and how they are related. At other times you may be focusing on the readers to whom you are attempting to communicate, asking yourself what they know, what they need to know, and how your information needs to be framed and presented to make sense to them.

**8. Circulate drafts.** Try to generate drafts quickly so that readers have time to respond. Give drafts to more than one reader. In addition to your advisor, give a draft to friends, roommates, or anyone else who is willing to be a critical reader and make suggestions. Perhaps you can arrange

to exchange drafts with other students doing senior projects. Professional writers take advantage of editors to get feedback and guide their revisions; you should too.

## APPENDIX N

### LAYOUT AND FORMATTING SPECIFICATIONS

The exact format of your thesis will depend on the conventions of scholarly writing in your discipline. The following physical specifications for the thesis/project are fairly universal:

**Printing:** The final draft is to be printed on a letter-quality computer printer (laser printer or inkjet printer). Use a print face and font size similar to that in this manual; do not print the thesis in italics, script, or any other non-standard print face.

**Photocopies:** The Honors College will photocopy for distribution the completed final draft of your work.

**Binding:** The Honors College will be responsible for binding the final drafts of your thesis. Please supply the Honors College with an **unbound** copy of your work on plain white paper.

**Spacing:** Unlike this manual, the text of your thesis is to be double-spaced. Tables and material in the appendices may be single-spaced if appropriate.

**Margins:** Leave minimum margins of one inch on the right and bottom. To accommodate the space used in binding, leave a minimum margin of 1-1/2 inches on the left side. The minimum margin at the top should be 1 inch above the top of the letters in the first line of type and not less than 3/4 inch above the top of the page number.

**Pagination:** Number the pages of the machinery (abstract, acknowledgments, and table of contents) with lower-case Roman numerals (ii, iii, iv, etc.) centered just above the bottom margin of the page; count the title page as the first page but do not place a number on it.

Beginning with the first page of the text and continuing to the end, pages must be numbered in sequence with Arabic numerals. All pages with major headings are counted and are to have numbers on those pages.

The page number is to be at the top of the page, just inside the right-hand margin and at least five spaces down from the top edge of the paper and one double space above the first line of text. Page numbers must be in the same place on each page; the last numeral of the page number should be on the right-hand margin line. Insertion of numbers such as 49A or of uncounted pages is unacceptable.