

HONORS 4V87: FINAL THESIS HOURS Course Syllabus

In this final sequence of thesis writing, Honors seniors complete the research for their thesis project, finish writing the thesis essay, defend the Honors thesis before a faculty committee, and submit the final revised and formatted copies of the thesis to the Honors Program (HP) office for binding.

Overview of Dates & Deadlines

See *Description of Assignments* following this timetable for more information

20 June	Third chapter due to thesis mentor only (if necessary). Begin process to schedule the thesis defense with the thesis committee and reserve the room to be used for the defense.
7 July	Thesis Defense Scheduling Form due to the Honors Program office (email thesis@baylor.edu). This form must be signed by the student and the three faculty members of the defense committee.
7 July	Any remaining body chapters/sections due to thesis mentor only.
14 July	Last day to submit draft of complete thesis project to <i>the thesis mentor</i> .
21 July	Last day to distribute <i>complete & polished</i> drafts of thesis to examining committee and the Honors Program office for formatting review, i.e., one week before defense.
28 July	Last day to defend the thesis project before your examining committee.
4 August	Last day to submit approved and formatted final copies of thesis to BEARdocs with all necessary signatures and forms. Complete all requirements for HON 4088, Honors Exit Review.

Set Up BEARdocs Account Right Away

If you haven't yet done so, you must set up your BEARdocs account right away. You will not be able to submit your finished thesis if your BEARdocs account isn't created in a timely fashion. To do this,

1. In a web browser, go to beardocs.baylor.edu
2. Select the "Login" link in the upper right-hand corner.
3. Enter your Bear ID and password.
4. After you log in, your name should display where the "Login" link displayed
5. To log out, select "logout" from the drop-down menu associated with your name

Description of Assignments

1, 3-4. Continuation of research and writing:

As a candidate for August graduation, you should have already submitted drafts of at least one or two working chapters of the thesis project. Your timetable for completing the remaining thesis chapters will, of course, be determined by agreement with your faculty mentor. But to allow adequate time for you to revise and prepare to defend the thesis project, the Honors Program has established the above writing deadlines. Note that during the graduation semester you *need not* submit copies of the third and fourth completed chapters, one by one, to the HP office. Also, note that students

with more than two remaining chapters/sections to complete must operate on a more accelerated schedule during the graduation semester.

It is necessary that you meet with your thesis mentor at least weekly as you are finishing writing your thesis. **Never assume that no news is good news when it comes to getting feedback from your mentor.** You are responsible for ensuring that you receive adequate feedback and make the required corrections to your draft. Be diligent in maintaining good communication with your mentor. Contact the Honors Program staff *early* if you are having problems with this.

2. Thesis Defense Scheduling Form

Submitted to the HP office via email (thesis@baylor.edu)

An examining committee of three faculty members will evaluate the finished thesis project at the thesis defense. The committee must include at least: (1) the supervising Baylor professor (your thesis mentor), who serves as committee chair or first reader; (2) another full-time Baylor professor from the project area (i.e., discipline or department), who serves as second reader; and (3) an outside reader, an expert in the field from another discipline/department. The third reader will usually be a faculty member from another department outside of the project area with some insight into the subject matter. Additional committee members may be appointed at the discretion of the committee chair. If you've not yet done so, you should discuss the composition of your committee with your thesis mentor right away.

The Thesis Defense Scheduling Form must be signed by you and all the members of the thesis defense committee. The form must include all of the requested information or it will be rejected by the Honors Program, potentially delaying your thesis defense and consequentially putting Honors Program graduation at risk. While you should seek the aid of your thesis mentor in making these arrangements, it is your responsibility to secure the room and ensure that the defense is scheduled at a time that works for all the members of your committee.

As you arrange for the thesis defense, you should also print out and provide to your thesis mentor a copy of the (1) Oral Defense Guidelines and (2) Oral Defense Evaluation Form. These documents are available on the Honors Program web site, www.baylor.edu/honorsprogram/thesisdocs.

4. Draft of complete thesis project (the version similar to that distributed to the examining committee):

Given to the faculty mentor

This version of the thesis essay, pending some refinements, will be evaluated by a faculty committee during your oral defense of the Honors thesis. Thus, it should be a near-finished product, revised in consultation with the faculty mentor, free of grammatical and spelling errors, and logical in its reasoning and presentation of evidence and conclusions. (It should therefore include such elements as introductory and concluding chapters.) You must make and distribute copies to your examining committee (see below); and you must give these faculty members sufficient time to study the thesis, i.e., at least one week, before the oral defense occurs.

Discuss with your thesis mentor whether this should be submitted via paper or electronically.

5. Distribute polished drafts to your thesis committee and to the Honors Program office

This draft differs from the draft discussed above in the level of polish and revision evidenced in the writing. This draft will be the basis for the thesis defense. **Students are strongly encouraged to submit the draft to the thesis committee before this deadline.** It is expected that each committee member will have at least one week to review the completed draft. **Failure to provide at least one week for committee review may, at the faculty mentor's discretion, lead to an unsatisfactory grade assignment and a failure of the entire thesis project.**

The electronic draft submitted to the Honors Program office should be emailed to thesis@baylor.edu. This draft will be evaluated for **proper formatting and errors**. As such, this draft needs to be in near perfect condition.

You can find guidance and examples of proper formatting in the Thesis Formatting Guide, available online at <https://www.baylor.edu/honorsprogram/thesisformat>.

Specific factors that will be evaluated include (but are not limited to)

- proper margins,
- formatting/spacing of section headings,
- pagination, and
- formatting of notes and bibliography.

Students are advised to begin formatting the document as they write it. Note that if errors are found by the Honors Program office, the student will be responsible for making ALL corrections prior to submitting the final draft. **Failure to make these corrections may preclude Honors Program graduation.**

6. Oral defense of the thesis project (approx. one hour long):

The oral defense usually lasts an hour to an hour-and-a-half. Students must bring a blank copy of the Oral Defense Evaluation Form (i.e., the page wherein all three faculty on the committee will sign off on the thesis) to the defense. For more information regarding the thesis defense, see the Oral Defense and Submission Guidelines available on the Honors Program web site, <http://www.baylor.edu/content/services/document.php/61213.DOC>.

7. Final submission of the Honors thesis (including personal copies to be bound):

(NB: Students are STRONGLY urged to submit the finished project sooner than this.)

The final version of the thesis essay should include all of the revisions suggested by the defense committee and Honors Program staff; copies of the *signature page* (one per copy to be bound) can be signed unsigned. If signed, it must be inserted electronically after the abstract page in the PDF copy of the thesis submitted to BEARdocs.

BEARdocs is the online repository for your thesis. All theses must thus be submitted online in Archival PDF format. After submitting your thesis (along with the required Honors College agreement form) to BEARdocs, it will be available to you and other researchers and libraries via the internet. As such, it is important that the formatting of your thesis be polished and consistent with the standards of the Honors Program. Converting your thesis into a single archival PDF may take some time, so it is best to plan ahead and finish the thesis well before the final deadline.

As of Summer 2021, Honors Program students need only submit the thesis to BEARdocs. Any printed and bound copies of the thesis will use the BEARdocs PDF for printing.

HON 4088, Honors Exit Review. The Exit Review is not a test or exam. Rather, it is simply a review by the Honors Program that all of your Honors requirements have been satisfied. An Honors Program student **MUST** register for HON 4088 and earn a grade of “Credit” to be recognized as an Honors Program graduate.

IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT THE FINAL DEADLINE: In order to process the thesis in time for graduation, the thesis and *all* other Honors Program requirements must be completed by this final deadline. Failure to meet this final deadline will necessarily mean that you will either not graduate from the Honors Program in August or that you will have to delay graduation until a later semester. **Late submissions past the final deadline will not be accepted**, so plan your schedule accordingly and make sure that you give yourself a cushion of at least a day or two in case something should go awry. The Honors Program strongly urges all students to move the thesis project forward so that you will not be behind if unexpected circumstances arise.

Grades

The thesis mentor will be responsible for assigning a grade, either “Credit” or “No Credit” for HON 4V87. Grades will be awarded as the student progresses through the thesis project rather than at the end. In other words, students will get credit (or not) at the end of the semester(s) in which they registered for HON 4V87. In the case of incompletes, the thesis mentor will enter changes of grade in coordination with the HP office as needed.

In addition to the basic mark of “Credit” or “No Credit” for thesis hours, each Honors student will be given a more specific and holistic evaluation—ranging from “Unsatisfactory” to “Outstanding”—by the examining committee after the thesis defense. The committee will consider both the product (the completed thesis) and the overall process (e.g., conducting research, writing drafts, meeting deadlines) in assigning this mark. The committee’s evaluation will be a part of the permanent Honors Program record of each senior, and it may be used as a factor in determining his or her eligibility for awards occasionally given to the program’s graduates.

Additional Notes

Plagiarism: This should go without saying, but students should be extremely careful in this regard. Always cite works referenced in your thesis. A thesis writer guilty of plagiarism, whether intended or inadvertent, will receive a grade of no credit for the thesis project and may face additional consequences as determined by the Honor Council and/or the Honors Program Director.

Communication with the thesis mentor: Do not fail to stay in touch with your thesis mentor. If you are not getting adequate feedback, contact the Honors Program office early on, and we will try to facilitate communication between you and your mentor. It is, however, ultimately your responsibility to make sure that you are getting all necessary feedback.

Intermediary deadlines for writing: Deadlines are assigned to assist you in keeping on track with the thesis. While intermediate deadlines may be adjusted with prior approval of both the Honors Program and the thesis mentor, this is usually not to your advantage. Students who delay the submission of work often find themselves in a bind towards the conclusion of the project. In previous semesters, this has sometimes resulted in an unsatisfactory thesis that required the Honors Program student to either delay graduation or to not finish the Honors Program.