

HONORS THESIS GUIDELINES
Committee on Undergraduate Honors
(last revised on 9/1/2019)

Introduction

The Senior Honors Thesis is the culmination of your college experience, emphasizing critical thinking, writing, and independent work. Your thesis may relate to your major, but it does not have to. You are encouraged to select a topic that you find exciting and satisfying, and that will allow you to be creative. Completing an Honors Thesis is an opportunity to:

- Satisfy your intellectual curiosity and creativity
- Develop transferable skills
- Work closely with faculty mentors
- Open windows into future professions
- Compete for Baruch's Kanner Prize for best thesis (\$500)

Students who successfully complete their theses are eligible to graduate with honors in the discipline in which the thesis is written. Though not a requirement, completion of an honors thesis is highly recommended for eligible BA majors and for all students who are considering pursuing an advanced (masters, doctoral, or professional) degree.

The Honors Thesis is, in most cases, a two-semester project completed under the supervision of a faculty mentor. Students completing theses in the Natural Sciences may be given permission to undertake a three-semester project. Since the thesis constitutes six to twelve semester hours of the baccalaureate degree program, it should reflect a significant time commitment, be of high quality, and demonstrate personal intellectual growth.

If you are thinking of writing an honors thesis, please contact Prof. David Rosenberg, Interim Chair of the College Committee on Undergraduate Honors (9-220a, david.rosenberg@baruch.cuny.edu) one full semester prior to the anticipated start date. Most students write a thesis in their senior year, though it may be possible for upper juniors to enroll.

Proposing a thesis project

In order to pursue an honors thesis project, a student must meet the following qualifications:

- 3.5 cumulative GPA and 3.5 GPA in discipline in which thesis will be completed,
- At least two 3000 level courses* completed in discipline of thesis,
- Approval of proposed thesis mentor, department chair/honors coordinator, and chair of College Committee on Undergraduate Honors.

*Please note that some departments/disciplines may have different/additional prerequisites. If a student has fulfilled the prerequisites in more than one discipline/department, it is possible to undertake an interdisciplinary thesis project [IDC 6001H/6002H]. While most students complete traditional research projects, creative endeavors [e.g. writing a play or novel] will be considered.

Please consult with the department in which you plan to do honors works and with the Chair of the Committee on Undergraduate Honors for further information. If you are enrolled in Baruch's Honors Program, you should also consult with your academic advisor.

Preparing a Prospectus

The "Application and Prospectus for an Honors Thesis" cover sheet is available at the end of this document. The major requirements for the prospectus include:

1. A detailed statement of the major objective(s) and expected contribution(s) of your proposed study or creative activity. (What question(s) do you intend to address? Who is your audience and why is this work important to them? What motivates and prepares you to do this project? What is novel or unique about your project given previous related work?)
2. A detailed description of your research/creative approach and the specific procedures you will follow to carry out your project. (In what methodological tradition does your project stand? What are the exact steps you will take? What methods and techniques will you use? Do you have the required knowledge to carry out those steps and, if not, how will you acquire it?)
3. A concise statement of where and when the supporting experimental, field and/or library or other work is to be performed.
4. A detailed bibliography including the seminal works in the field and any other relevant materials.

Due Date: The prospectus must be completed during the semester prior to the one in which you expect to begin the thesis [usually upper junior or lower senior year]. The **prospectus approved by your mentor and the completed application form must be submitted to the chair of the College Committee on Undergraduate Honors by April 1st for a project starting in the fall semester or November 1st for a project starting in the spring semester.** The college committee will review the proposal and approve it or suggest revisions. **If you are asked to revise the proposal then you must complete your revisions and resubmit the prospectus to the committee chair no later than May 1st for enrollment in the fall semester or December 1st for enrollment in the spring semester. Students may not enroll in either Thesis I [6001H] or Thesis II [6002H] during the winter session or summer session terms.**

The prospectus must be approved by your mentor, department chair, and the Committee on Undergraduate Honors. The Committee on Undergraduate Honors reserves the privilege of recommending changes to the thesis proposal. Students must not commence work on their theses until the proposal has been given full approval. Where human subjects are involved (e.g., field work, experiments or certain other data collection efforts), students will have to secure CUNY Institutional Review Board approval before conducting the research before research can commence. Inquiries should be directed at [Baruch's Human Research Protection Program Office](#).

For more guidance on how to write a prospectus and how to find a mentor, contact the chair of the College Committee on Undergraduate Honors and consult the [Undergraduate Thesis Research Website](#) maintained by Baruch's Honors Program and the Library's Thesis Research [Website](#) maintained by Stephen Francoeur, the library's liaison to the Honors Program. The chair of the College Committee can provide a successful prospectus from a previous student as a sample upon request. Prospective students are also encouraged to read Charles Lipson's *How to write a BA Thesis: A Practical Guide from your first ideas to your finished paper*, which is available as an [e-book](#) (login required) through Baruch's library.

After the proposal is approved

- *Registration:* The Chair of the College Committee on Undergraduate Honors will initiate the registration for your XXX 6001H section upon approval of your prospectus. You are strongly encouraged not to register for more than a total of 16 credits in the semesters in which you are writing a thesis. Thesis writing is a very intensive and time-consuming process. You will not be registered for XXX 6002H until your mentor gives his/her written approval to the Chair of the Committee on Undergraduate Honors. Towards the end of the first semester, the chair of the College Committee will ask you and your mentor for a progress update. How you have progressed will determine whether permission to continue is granted.
- *Credits:* Depending upon the discipline, the thesis project normally requires 3-4 credit hours per semester for two consecutive semesters. In the natural sciences, three-semester projects (and/or 4 credit hours) may be approved.
- *Honors Thesis Research:* The work is done independently with regular input from your mentor. By the end of the first semester a substantial portion of the proposed work should be completed and you should be on track to complete the thesis within 4 months. At the beginning of the second semester, you and your mentor should set up a departmental committee of at least two thesis readers. The readers should be faculty in your department. (Qualified faculty outside your department are generally accepted as well. In this case, you or your mentor should inform the chair of the college committee of the readers before submitting the thesis paper for review.)
- *Format, Presentation and Activities:* All theses are subject to the requirements listed below. Beyond these broad requirements the mentor and the departmental committee will determine the appropriate discipline-specific format and presentation style. Consult with your mentor to reach an understanding on what is expected of your thesis work. Students (at any stage) are expected to present their work at [Baruch's Annual Creative Inquiry Day \(CID\)](#) in May. You are also encouraged to participate in the [International Conference of Undergraduate Research \(ICUR\)](#) (co-hosted by Baruch in the fall), other conferences ([CUR website](#)), and in [activities for undergraduate researchers at CUNY](#) such as the [C-SURP](#) summer program.
- *Publication:* Upon successful completion students are expected to make their thesis available to the Baruch library. You will receive a reminder from the chair of the

college committee and Stephen Francoeur. Students are also encouraged to publish their work in professional outlets. Some peer-reviewed journals give special consideration to submissions from undergraduate students and some journals are devoted entirely to research and creative work by undergraduates (e.g., [UReCA](#)). Consult with your mentor or the chair of the college committee for publication strategies and journal ideas.

Resources and Support

In addition to the primary guidance of your mentor, the following resources are available to support you in the process of writing your thesis:

- *Literature on how to write a thesis*: Current and prospective honors thesis students are strongly encouraged to work with Charles Lipson's *How to write a BA Thesis: A Practical Guide from your first ideas to your finished paper*, which is available in the Library as an [e-book](#). Your faculty mentor may recommend additional reference books that are appropriate for your discipline.
- *Newman Library*: Contact Research Librarian Stephen Francoeur (Library Building, Room 421, 646 312-1620, Stephen.Francoeur@baruch.cuny.edu) for assistance with library resources related to honors thesis research. He also maintains the library's [Undergraduate Honors Thesis website](#) which provides information about the program, how to conduct research, how to prepare a thesis, and [Baruch Honors Theses](#) available from the Newman library. For help with spatial data and research contact Geospatial Data Librarian Frank Donnelly (646 312-1657, francis.donnelly@baruch.cuny.edu).
- *Baruch Writing Center*: Writing consultants are available for one-to-one meetings to help you throughout the writing process—from developing your project, to using sources, to structuring your argument, to revising on the sentence level. Schedule appointments through the Writing Center's website (<https://bc.mywconline.com/>) or by contacting the director, Diana Hamilton (Diana.Hamilton@baruch.cuny.edu).
- *Research Funding and Supporting Activities*: Currently, Baruch does not provide monetary support for honors thesis research projects but students who anticipate research-related expenses should contact their department chair and the chair of the College Committee to inquire about possible funding sources. Students are encouraged to apply for support from external sources such as the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) Portz Fellowship (deadline: mid-March). The Portz Fellowships support original and extended interdisciplinary projects for up to 18 months. For more information on the application process and exact deadlines see here: [Portz Fellowship](#). The NCHC website also maintains a [comprehensive list](#) of scholarship and other funding opportunities and events that can support undergraduate research and creative activity. Students may also apply for CUNY funding and should consult [CUNY's website for undergraduate research](#) for current opportunities and activities.
- *College Committee on Undergraduate Honors*: The committee consists of 12 research-active faculty from across Marxe, Weissman and Zicklin. It reviews all proposals and

submitted theses for final approval and awards the Kanner Prize for best thesis of the academic year. Contact Interim Committee Chair, Prof. David Rosenberg (VC-220A, david.rosenberg@baruch.cuny.edu) for questions about the program. The chair also maintains the Organization “Baruch Honors Thesis Program” on Blackboard to share information and connect current and past thesis writers and mentors.

Thesis Requirements

Due Date: An electronic copy (in Word or PDF format) of the thesis as well as an original version of the cover page signed by the mentor and the two (or more) faculty readers (or a high-resolution scan of this page in PDF format) should be submitted to the Chair of the College Committee on Undergraduate Honors on or before the first Monday in December or the last Monday in April, depending upon the semester of completion. If the student anticipates any difficulty meeting this deadline, s/he must consult with the thesis mentor and with the Chair of the Committee on Undergraduate Honors.

Although there are certain formal requirements of every traditional research thesis, listed below, as discussed above **the vast majority of requirements, such as page count, appropriate presentation and citation styles, etc. will be determined individually for each student in discussion with his or her mentor.** Students should work with their mentors to determine a length appropriate to the scope and discipline of their project. Similarly, students pursuing nontraditional formats including creative works or theses with both creative and analytical components should work closely with their mentor and the chair of the college committee throughout the process from proposal to final work. Please do this work early so that expectations are clear throughout the thesis-writing process. Remember, a thesis is significantly more than a traditional term paper. It entails at least as much time and effort as two upper level courses.

Content

- The thesis must start with a brief (at most one-page) abstract. It must include a table of contents [including chapter titles], and it must include a standard system of citation commonly employed in the thesis writer’s field.
- There must be a clearly articulated thesis statement and the paper must address the thesis statement in a well-written, well-organized, and coherent fashion. The methodology used to defend the thesis argument must be made clear. The Committee on Undergraduate Honors takes writing very seriously. If you are having trouble with the organization of the paper or writing style, you should consult with the Writing Center (VC 8-185) as well as your mentor. Keep in mind that the College Committee is composed of faculty representing several disciplines. While your paper should be written in a format that is appropriate for your field of study, the methodology and discussion of findings should be written in a manner that is understandable to educated readers who are not experts in that field.

Format

- Cover page
 - Departmental Certification of the completed thesis shall take the form of a statement, which becomes the thesis cover page and includes the following information:
 - Student's name
 - Title of thesis
 - Date of submission
 - Signature of faculty sponsor
 - Signatures of at least two additional full-time Baruch faculty members in the relevant field of study who have read and approved the thesis
 - The cover page must also include the following statement with the appropriate phrases inserted: "Submitted to the Committee on Undergraduate Honors at Baruch College of the City University of New York in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Business Administration/Bachelor of Science in [Discipline] with Honors."
 - The thesis requires this cover page in order to be passed.
- Each student is required to submit an electronic copy (in Word or PDF format) of his/her thesis as well as an original version of the thesis cover page signed by the mentor and the two (or more) faculty readers (or a high resolution scan of the original page). The documents should be submitted to the chair of the college committee.
- Citation style: Each student should use a citation style (e.g. MLA, APA, etc.) appropriate for the discipline in which he/she is working. Please determine this with your mentor.

Thesis Evaluation

- At the end of the first semester, if the student's progress is satisfactory, the mentor assigns a "Y" placeholder grade. This allows the student to register for XXX 6002H. The chair of the College Committee will ask the student for a progress report, review it and consult with the mentor before processing the registration for XXX 6002H. If the work is not satisfactory, the mentor may assign a letter grade, precluding the student from continuing the thesis project the following term.
- At the conclusion of the second semester, the mentor assigns a letter grade to the project, which retroactively applies to the prior semester as well. If the mentor assigns a grade of "A" or "A-" and the departmental representatives (readers) approves, the thesis is forwarded to the College Committee.
- Students whose work is not deemed to have earned an "A" will still receive academic credit and a grade, to be determined by the thesis mentor.
- The Departmental Honors Committee (thesis readers) will certify the thesis for presentation to the College Committee on Undergraduate Honors.
- The College Committee on Undergraduate Honors determines whether or not a thesis has earned the distinction of graduation with honors in the designated discipline. All decisions of the committee are considered final.

- The regulations shall apply to all students in all disciplines. In cases where a contradiction between these regulations and those of the Departmental Honors Committee arises, the regulations of the College Committee on Undergraduate Honors shall prevail.
- Action on theses submitted past due dates shall be deferred by the College Committee on Undergraduate Honors until the following review cycle, so long as the student has not completed all degree requirements. No provision is made for review during the summer.

Thesis Mandates (also see requirements above)

- Theses will not be accepted by the College Committee after the due date.
- Theses must be read and approved by the student's mentor and two (or more) additional readers in the discipline in which the thesis is being written.
- To receive approval for graduation with honors, the thesis MUST include:
 - A signed cover sheet, abstract, and table of contents
 - A well-articulated thesis statement
 - A research methodology statement that describes the main definitions, methods, procedures, and techniques used to defend the thesis argument
 - Strong support of that thesis statement throughout the body of the paper
 - Citations standard to the field in which the thesis is written (e.g. MLA, APA)

INSTRUCTIONS: Please prepare your prospectus [3-5 pages, typed, single-spaced] on a separate sheet of paper and attach it to this application.

The prospectus should include the following:

1. A detailed statement of the major objective(s) and expected contribution(s) of your proposed study or creative activity. (What question(s) do you intend to address? Who is your audience and why is this work important to them? What motivates and prepares you to do this project? What is novel or unique about your project given previous related work?)
2. A detailed description of your research/creative approach and the specific procedures you will follow to carry out your project. (In what methodological tradition does your project stand? What are the exact steps you will take? What methods and techniques will you use? Do you have the required knowledge to carry out those steps and, if not, how will you acquire it?)
3. A concise statement of where and when the supporting experimental, field and/or library or other work is to be performed.
4. A detailed bibliography including the seminal works in the field and any other relevant materials.

DUE DATE: To guarantee timely review by the College Committee on Undergraduate Honors, the 3-5 page prospectus approved by the mentor and this completed application form (signed by the mentor and the department chair) and are to be submitted to Prof. David Rosenberg (david.rosenberg@baruch.cuny.edu), the chair of the College Committee on Undergraduate Honors no later than November 1 for thesis projects starting in the following spring semester or April 1 for work commencing in the following fall semester.

APPROVAL:

Mentor:

Signature _____ Date _____

Chair, Department:

Signature _____ Date _____

Chair, Committee on Undergraduate Honors:

Signature _____ Date _____