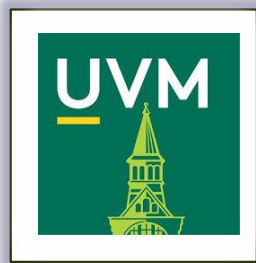


Thinking of Writing a Senior Thesis?



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Qualifications

HCOL Honors

- Cumulative minimum GPA 3.40 but may need higher.
- Receive invitation from HCOL junior fall.
- Take HCOL 3881, 3882, or 3883 (HEC) junior fall.
- Take HCOL 3000: Thesis Proposal Preparation junior fall.
- Find TT CAS faculty who agrees to be thesis advisor junior fall.
- Submit HCOL thesis proposal junior spring end of March (~8 pages).
- Receive HCOL thesis proposal approval in April.

CAS Honors (if not in HCOL)

- Cumulative minimum GPA 3.40 but may need higher.
- Receive invitation from CAS junior year, 2nd semester.
- Find TT CAS faculty to agree to be thesis advisor junior spring.
- Submit CAS thesis proposal senior fall late September (~8 pages).
- Receive CAS thesis proposal approval in October.

Note: If you are not an HSOC major and you are in a college other than CAS (e.g., CALS, CEMS, CESS, CNHS, GSB, RSENr), please consult that college for their guidelines, which may differ somewhat.



Who Should Consider Doing a Senior Thesis

- You are passionate about a topic or issue and want to learn more.
- You want to make a scholarly and/or contribution to the analysis of an issue.
- You want to do a large independent project with the guidance of a faculty mentor.
- You like and are motivated to work on research, reading, analysis, and writing.
- You are committed to academic integrity and research ethics.
- You are both meticulous about detail and mindful of the big picture.
- You take initiative to keep yourself on task and on time with independent work.
- You take initiative to reach out and ask questions when you need guidance.
- You are dependable and considerate.
- You have enough space in your schedule to devote to 6 credits of thesis work your senior year.
- You are considering attending graduate school.



Some Reasons To Consider Not Doing a Senior Thesis

- Someone else wants you to do it, and your heart is not in it.
- You only want to do it to stay in the Honors College or to get honors on your transcript.
- You haven't done well at doing high quality research and writing projects in your regular classes.
- You don't have anything about which you're interested in researching and writing.
- You would hate doing a large long-term independent project and writing up to 50 pages or more.
- You just want to do your own thing and don't want to listen to the advice of a faculty mentor.
- You don't like or are not motivated to work on research, reading, analysis, and writing.
- You don't care about academic integrity, accuracy, quotations marks, citing, or bibliographies.
- You don't care about research ethics, respecting confidentiality, or being careful about data security.
- You have difficulty with taking initiative, being dependable, and meeting deadlines.
- You don't have room in your schedule with other requirements, work, etcetera.
- You don't plan on attending graduate school or doing anything that involves research or writing.



A decorative graphic of stylized leaves in white and light green, arranged in two clusters on the left side of the slide.

What Topics Can You Research?

A Thesis in Health and Society:

- Needs to be about something related to the interaction of health and society.
- That can include things like health, well-being, illness, healing, caregiving, and/or healthcare from a social science or humanities perspective.
- It should focus on related social, cultural, geographic, political, economic, psychological, and/or environmental issues.
- It can be on something in the US or another part of the world.

A Thesis Outside HSOC:

- Students may also have the option to do a senior thesis in another department or program if they have the academic qualifications and can find an advisor to work with.
- Which topics, issues, and areas are appropriate for those departments or programs depends on their guidelines.

Finding a Thesis Advisor for an HSOC Thesis

- **You Need to Build Your Case As Faculty Are Not Obligated:** Don't assume a faculty member will serve as your thesis advisor. Faculty have a limit on how many theses they can advise and are not obligated to agree to be your thesis advisor. Sometimes faculty are on leave or sabbatical. An academic advisor is different from a thesis advisor.
- **Thesis Advisor Must Be CAS TT HSOC Faculty:** Thesis advisors for Health and Society need to be College of Arts and Sciences tenured or tenure-track (CAS TT) HSOC faculty. This list of HSOC faculty tells you who is in CAS and whether they are tenured or tenure track (assistant, associate, or full professor): <https://www.uvm.edu/cas/healthsociety/faculty-and-staff>.
- **Take Classes with Many Faculty of Interest:** Take classes with several faculty members you might like to ask to be your thesis advisor. This will help you get needed training in knowledge and methods and help the faculty get to know you. If available, also consider applying for a Teaching Assistant practicum or a Research Assistant position with them. Beyond a thesis advisor, you'll need two additional faculty to serve on your thesis defense committee, and they need not be CAS or tenure track or even HSOC, so take their classes and apply for positions with them, too. Make sure to do high quality work, get things in on time, be considerate, and have excellent attendance and participation.
- **Meet with Many Faculty:** Make an appointment and/or come to office hours to talk with faculty to explore common interests, including faculty you might like to ask to be your thesis advisor and faculty you might like to ask to serve on your thesis defense committee. Start doing this sophomore year if you can. Build your network and don't put all your eggs in one basket. Remember to demonstrate your initiative by doing your homework before meeting with faculty. See relevant information on UVM's webpages, consult a reference librarian, and/or do some relevant reading.

Examples of CAS TT HSOC Faculty in CAS

Anthropology

Deborah Blom, Ellen Kozelka, Teresa Mares,
Jeanne Shea

Economics

Erkmen Aslim, Nathalie Mathieu-Bohl

Geography

Sarah Mah

Political Science

Alex Garlick

Psychology

Amy Hughes-Lansing

Elizabeth Pinel

Religion

Vicki Brennan

Sociology

Zobayer Ahmmad, Jennifer Lai, Jonathan
Shaffer, Jennifer Strickler

Finding an Advisor for a Thesis Outside Your Major

- **Students also have the option to do a senior thesis outside their major if they have the academic qualifications and can find an advisor to work with.**
 - *For example, an HSOC minor who has taken the right mix of HSOC courses may be able to do a senior thesis in HSOC.*
 - *For example, an HSOC major who has taken the right mix of courses in another department or program (e.g., Anthropology, Economics, Geography, Sociology, Political Science, Psychology, etc.) courses might be able to do a senior thesis in that area.*
- **Everything else just stated about finding an advisor applies, but you'll need a CAS TT faculty member in that other department/program who agrees to be your advisor.**
- **You'll also need to check if that department or program has additional requirements to be eligible to do a thesis under their prefix.**

How to Receive Credit for Thesis Work

HCOL Honors

- **Junior Fall:** Take HCOL 3881, 3882, or 3883 (Honors Enrichment Course or HEC, 1 credit) and HCOL 3000: Thesis Proposal Preparation (1 credit).
- **Senior Fall:** HSOC 4996: Honors (3 credits) and HCOL 4000 (0 credit thesis support seminar).
- **Senior Spring:** HSOC 4996: Honors (3 credits) and HCOL 4000 (0 credit thesis support seminar).

CAS Honors

- **Junior Fall and/or Spring:** Many faculty require some specific topical or methods or proposal writing preparation courses. Ask faculty you hope to work with how to prep for a thesis. E.g., for interview or observational research, take ANTH 3192. For epidemiological survey research, take STAT 3000.
- **Senior Fall:** HSOC 4996: Honors (3 credits). Or other prefix if doing outside HSOC.
- **Senior Spring:** HSOC 4996: Honors (3 credits). Or other prefix if doing outside HSOC.

Process & Timeline: HCOL Honors for HSOC Theses

Sophomore year

- Meet with TT CAS HSOC faculty with related interests, esp. faculty whose class(es) you have taken, and share your interests and ask for advice for preparing for thesis and which topical and methods classes to take.

Junior year, 1st semester

- Take HCOL 3881, 3882, or 3883 (HEC) junior fall with CAS TT HSOC faculty.
- Take HCOL 3000: Thesis Proposal Preparation junior fall.
- Make sure to take the needed methods courses by this year.
- Pass IRB Tutorial for social & behavioral research.
- Brainstorm idea: May be part of a faculty project or a brand-new project.
- Start a detailed annotated bibliography for project.
- Get feedback on project idea from potential thesis advisor(s).
- Find TT CAS faculty who agrees to be thesis advisor.
- Hone project idea in consultation with thesis advisor.
- Write scholarly literature review in consultation with thesis advisor.
- Design research methods for project in consultation with thesis advisor.
- Develop research project proposal and run by thesis advisor.

Junior year, 2nd semester

- Submit proposal to HCOL in their format end of March for approval.
- Register for 3 credits of HSOC 4996: Honors and HCOL 4000 (0 credit thesis support seminar) for fall.
- Submit to IRB and get human subjects research approval.

Summer before senior year

- Begin original research after IRB approval.

Senior year, 1st semester

- Continue reading and researching and analyzing.
- Hone outline and annotated bibliography.
- Draft introduction and some body chapters.
- Register for 3 credits of HSOC 4996: Honors and HCOL 4000 (0 credit thesis support seminar) for spring.
- Ask two more faculty to be on thesis committee.
- Submit Honors Thesis Defense Committee form.
- Schedule thesis defense.

Senior year, 2nd semester

- Complete intro, body, conclusion, biblio., and appendix.
- Consider applying to UVM's Student Research Conference.
- Give full draft to thesis advisor by or before end of March.
- Submit Schedule of College Honors Thesis Defense form.
- Revise based on thesis advisor feedback.
- Give revised draft to full thesis committee 2 weeks before defense.
- Develop PowerPoint and practice for defense.
- Option: Present at UVM's Student Research Conference mid-April.
- Thesis defense: Late-April - 1st week of May.
- Revise thesis based on committee recommendations.
- Turn in thesis to advisor and defense committee members and to the Dean's Office by last day of finals 4:00 pm. Committee Chair turns in Evaluation of Thesis Defense form.

Process & Timeline: CAS College Honors for HSOC Theses

Junior year, 1st semester

- Meet with TT CAS HSOC faculty with related interests, esp. faculty whose class(es) you have taken, and share your interests and ask for advice for preparing to do a senior thesis and which topical and methods classes to take.
- Develop basic project idea and run it by these faculty: sometimes it may be part of a project faculty are already doing, and sometimes a brand-new project.
- Make sure to take the needed methods courses by this year.
- Pass IRB Tutorial for social & behavioral research.

Junior year, 2nd semester

- Find TT CAS faculty who agrees to be thesis advisor.
- Hone project idea in consultation with thesis advisor.
- Start a detailed annotated bibliography for project.
- Write scholarly literature review for project.
- Design research methods for project.
- Develop research project proposal and run by thesis advisor.
- Contact ashonors@uvm.edu to express intent to do thesis.
- Register for 3 credits of HSOC 4996: Honors for fall.
- Submit to IRB and get human subjects research approval.

Summer before senior year

- Develop shorter version of proposal for CAS approval.
- Begin original research after IRB approval.

Senior year, 1st semester

- Submit shorter proposal to CAS end of Sept. for approval. Yes, weird timing, but humanities/math theses need less run-up.
- Continue reading and researching and analyzing.
- Hone outline and annotated bibliography.
- Draft introduction and some body chapters.
- Register for 3 credits of HSOC 4996: Honors for spring.
- Ask two more faculty to be on thesis committee.
- Submit Honors Thesis Defense Committee form.
- Schedule thesis defense.

Senior year, 2nd semester

- Complete intro, body, conclusion, biblio., and appendix.
- Consider applying to UVM's Student Research Conference.
- Give full draft to thesis advisor by or before end of March.
- Submit Schedule of College Honors Thesis Defense form.
- Revise based on thesis advisor feedback.
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- Turn in thesis to advisor and defense committee members and to the Dean's Office by last day of finals 4:00 pm. Committee Chair turns in Evaluation of Thesis Defense form.

Questions?





More questions?

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