



LANGSTON UNIVERSITY

Guidelines for Honors Program Scholars and Thesis Committee Members

Information for Honors Program Scholars and Thesis Committee Members

This guide is intended to benefit scholars enrolled in HN 3001 (Special Problems) and HN 4003 (Application of Research), as well as members of their thesis committees. Some sections are addressed primarily to scholars and others to faculty members on the thesis committees, but it is suggested that both groups read all sections.

The Honors Thesis is usually considered somewhere between an extensive research paper and a master's thesis. The scholar has three to four semesters in which to complete the thesis. The process typically begins when the scholar enrolls in HN 3001 (Special Problems) in the second semester of the sophomore year, and the scholar continues work in the first semester of the junior year. Work on the thesis is continued during the second semester of the junior year while the scholar is enrolled in HN 4003 (Application of Research Through Thesis Project), and it should be completed by the first semester of the senior year.

The scholars must provide ONE (1) original signature page and ONE (1) copy of the thesis to be submitted electronically to the Langston University Digital Commons online repository. The signature page submitted must be formatted like the sample document. See example of signature page in this publication.

In certain areas of the arts, the scholar may, with special permission from the Honors Program demonstrate a high level of ability and maturity by composing a group of poems, short stories, plays, etc.; producing and directing a high quality video; planning and performing in a recital, etc. Any such project would involve an agreed-upon writing component; however, and must satisfy the standard of being the capstone of an Honors Program education, representing final proof of worthiness to be a Langston University Honors Program graduate.

A typical Honors thesis has greater depth than a research paper because it will reveal a more thorough understanding of the literature (information on the subject) and data pertaining to the topic than a research paper would involve. The scholar will likely be involved with some primary sources; that is, the student is less likely to rely solely on what others have said and done and

more likely to bring his/her own analysis to bear on texts and data. Also, in some areas the scholars will experience hands-on involvement in doing experiments, gathering data, and analyzing its significance. It is hoped that some scholars will do research, for instance, which will add to the database and/or literature about components of Langston University which have not been previously studied and analyzed.

Steps in the Process

The Honors Program scholar may initiate involvement in the thesis project at any time. As a freshman, the scholar should search for a subject about which the student is passionate and would like to research. The scholar should also search for a potential committee chair—a faculty member in the major area with whom the student would like to work.

Formal steps in the Honors thesis/project process are listed in the order in which they will normally occur:

1. Enroll in HN 3001 (Special Problems)

The scholar shall enroll in this course in the spring semester of the sophomore year. The course's professor shall meet with each scholar to discuss information in this document and answer questions about the thesis/project.

2. Select the chair of the thesis committee:

Once the committee chair is identified and has agreed to serve, the chair and Honors Program Coordinator/Director shall assist the scholar, if necessary, in identifying one/two other faculty members to serve as committee members. The committee chair shall be a faculty member in the scholar's major department or in a related area. It is highly recommended that one of the committee members is an English professor or a professor with polished editing skills. It is not necessary for all committee members to be in the same department or school.

3. Secure signatures of the thesis committee chair and committee members and turn in signed Thesis Committee Agreement to the Director, or Coordinator, of the Honors Program.

The Thesis Committee Agreement is to be signed by all parties and filed in the Honors Program Office. Should any member of the original committee change, the scholar shall complete and submit a new Thesis Committee Agreement to the Director, or Coordinator, of the Honors Program.

4. Identify thesis problem/topic and limit.

The scholar shall work with the committee chair and committee members to identify a subject during their enrollment in HN3001 (Special Problems). The thesis chair/committee shall assist

the scholar in deciding on a topic, if necessary, and in limiting the scope of the thesis so that it can be completed in two to three semesters. The committee shall also assist the scholar in locating sources and in determining the organization of the thesis/project. This organization includes determining the documentation style for the research.

5. Develop a preliminary annotated bibliography.

As a part of the planning process during enrollment in Special Problems, the scholar shall develop an annotated bibliography (each entry is followed by a brief description of the information contained in the source). This bibliography shall be discussed with their committee chair before and during the development of Chapter 1.

6. Meet with committee chair and members.

The scholar's thesis committee chair and members coordinate the development of the thesis and are the decision-makers. The scholar, therefore, shall work primarily with their thesis committee and class professor throughout each semester, keeping the Honors Program Coordinator or Director informed as to their progress, problems, etc. The scholar shall meet with their thesis committee chair on a weekly basis, or they shall work out a mutually satisfactory schedule of appointments at which they can discuss the work underway. At each appointment, the scholar shall bring the work that has been done for the chair to review. At times, the scholar shall be asked to provide copies of his/her work for all committee members, especially when a chapter or section is completed. This process will enable the scholar to make most of the corrections as the thesis is being written rather than completing the entire thesis and possibly having to rewrite or restructure it.

7. Continue with the Preparation of the Thesis (the first semester of junior year)

During this semester, the scholar shall complete the next two chapters of the thesis, the Review of Literature, and the Methodology. Additionally, the scholar shall present their "research in progress" to the committee chair at least once during this semester.

8. Enroll in HN 4003 (Application of Research Through Thesis/Project).

During this semester, the scholar shall make significant progress toward the completion of the thesis or complete the thesis, making all corrections suggested by their committee and the professor who will coordinate this course. The grade for this course shall be given by the professor in consultation with the committee chair or designee.

9. Final submission of thesis.

Assure that all necessary correction that are suggested by the committee are made and that the thesis is ready for submission and presentation.

10. Oral presentation in which the scholar reports on the thesis research and findings.

The oral presentation will be arranged by the thesis committee chair in consultation with the course's professor. The thesis committee and all interested faculty and staff shall attend this presentation.

11. Electronically submit the required one (1) original signature page and one copy of the thesis (free of errors, using the format and style approved by the thesis committee).

The thesis will be submitted electronically to the Langston University Digital Commons online repository. Inclusion means that visitors to the website will have the opportunity to see your research and contact you for questions, insight, etc.

Style and Format

A researched paper should adhere consistently and correctly to a documentation style appropriate to the field of study. The scholar, as advised by their committee, shall follow a style manual such as MLA, APA, etc. Whatever documentation style is used, the thesis must include a bibliography or works cited page.

Scholars doing a creative project which is not a thesis, such as a recital, art exhibit, video, creative writing, etc. shall submit an explanatory text, description of the project, or other written materials to accompany the project. This shall be agreed upon ahead of time by the course's professor and the thesis committee chair, who shall require that the scholar detail the type of writing to accompany the project at the time the plan is submitted. For example, a scholar who plans a recital shall be expected to research and write program notes and arrange for publicity. A scholar producing and directing a video shall keep a written journal of the project while it is in process and have a written text to accompany the video. The creative work alone will not be acceptable in lieu of the thesis, but must be accompanied by appropriate written material as approved by the course's professor and the thesis committee chair.

The format to be used for the thesis shall include (1) title page, (2) signature page, (3) acknowledgements, (4) table of contents, (5) list of tables (if included), (6) abstract, (7) body of thesis, (8) bibliography or work cited, (9) appendices, and (10) vita. These sections will be described in detail along with specific instructions on format, which shall be provided by the course's professor and/or the thesis committee chair. Reminder: the committee determines the precise format.

The Importance of Successful Completion of the Thesis

Successful completion of the thesis means that the scholar has demonstrated mastery of the capstone experience in the Honors Program. It means that the thesis can be listed on the scholar's resume and that the courses for which the student has received credit while working on the thesis-HN 3001 (Special Problems) and HN 4003 (Application of Research Through Thesis/Project)-which total four (4) hours are recorded on the scholar's transcript.

The title of the scholar's thesis, along with the student's name, hometown, major and committee chair shall be included in the University's Commencement Program.

Getting Started

1. Choosing a Topic-The topic shall be manageable (limited) and meaningful (something the scholar is interested in knowing more about).
2. Situating the Question-The scholar will find their niche in the literature of information about the subject. The scholar will decide what they can add.
3. Identifying Resources-Utilize the Research Librarians. Do not rely on textbooks or the internet exclusively.
4. Letting the Creative Juices Flow- The scholar shall create notes, brainstorm, discuss ideas with the committee chair and members, other teachers, and friends. Ideas come when one starts reading and talking about thoughts.
5. Writing.-The scholar shall begin writing. Do not worry about how to begin. Just begin.

Organizing the Thesis

Think about the various parts of the thesis proper (the main part of the thesis). Organization will vary, depending on the scholar's discipline, but the thesis may be composed of five chapters of varying lengths as follows:

Chapter I: Introduction

Chapter II:Literature Review (What is already known?)

Chapter III: Methods (The scholar's approach to the question/topic.)

Chapter IV: Presentation (The scholar's contribution to the body of knowledge based on the research or study)

Chapter V: Conclusion (Where does the scholar go from here with this subject or question?)

The structure is similar to papers that scholars have done before. The thesis committee will explain the structure or propose another structure more adaptable to the scholar's discipline so that this endeavor can be tackled in small doses. The scholar's success shall be determined by his/her willingness to begin immediately and persist until the end.

Typical Outline of a Thesis

The information given below is not applicable to theses in all areas. The thesis committee shall determine the format to be used in the scholar's respective area. This outline will, however, give an idea of what is typically expected in a thesis.

Chapter I INTRODUCTION (background necessary to understand project)

1. Introduction to thesis subject-what is the thesis about?
2. Background of the problem/topic-how did it come about?
3. Statement of the problem/topic-area of concern, felt need.
4. Purpose of the study-practical outcome or value.
5. Questions to be answered or objectives to be investigated
6. Assumptions in stating thesis question/topic
7. Rationale for doing this study.
8. Importance of the study (overlaps somewhat with #3).
9. Definition of terms (conceptual) if needed.
10. Scope and limitations of the study-narrow the focus.
11. Outline of the remainder of the thesis.

Chapter II REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE (include specific citations)

12. Organization of Chapter 2-overview.
13. Historical background of the problem/topic if appropriate.
14. Summary of existing studies relative to what has been found, who has done work, when and where latest research studies were completed, and what approaches involving methodology were followed by persons doing studies on topic/problem.

15. Establishment of possible need for this study and likelihood for obtaining meaningful, relevant, and significant results.
16. Report on the literature/studies reviewed;
 - a. Selection and arrangement of literature review is presented often in terms of questions to be considered, hypotheses set forth, or objectives or specific purposes.
 - b. Types of literature to be considered include books, periodical articles, monographs, dissertations, papers presented at professional meetings, etc. Be sure that internet sources lead to a printed referenced journal or book.
17. Brief summary of literature reviewed.

Note: Even though the scholar shall complete the “bulk” of Chapter 2 during his/her second semester of work on the thesis, this chapter may be “in progress” until the completion of the thesis.

Chapter III METHODOLOGY

18. Overview of the chapter.
19. Description of research methodology or approach-surveys, analyses, etc.
20. Research instruments if appropriate-test, questionnaires, etc.
21. Data collection if appropriate.
22. Processing of data if appropriate.
23. Methodological assumptions.
24. Limitations of study-weaknesses.
25. Summary.

Note: If methodology involves any “human subjects”, the scholar and their committee chair shall assure that Langston University’s approval process for conducting any research with human subjects through the Internal Review Board is followed.

Chapter IV ANALYSIS OR PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

26. Findings or results of study are presented (may use tables or charts when appropriate).
27. Findings are reported with respect to furnishing evidence for each question asked or hypothesis posed.
28. Appropriate headings are used to correspond to main questions or hypotheses together.
29. Tie together findings in relation to the theory, review of literature, or rationale.
30. Summary of chapter.

Chapter V SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

31. Brief summary of everything covered in first three chapters and in findings portion of Chapter IV.
32. Conclusions-"so what" of findings; often this is the hypothesis restated with Results.
33. Recommendations for
 - a. Implementing the findings.
 - b. Further research.
34. Brief conclusion.

Acknowledgements

INSTRUCTIONS

1. You are basically thanking the people who helped you while completing your thesis. This could be anyone who aided you with your research, provided advice or helpful suggestions or just gave you much needed support through the process.
2. Create a list of all the people who helped you with your thesis in any way. This will definitely include your thesis committee chair and thesis committee members. It might also include other professors, advisors, lab assistants, and family members.
3. Narrow your list to the people you would like to include in the acknowledgements page. Acknowledgements have more importance if you keep them exclusive.
4. Write a paragraph of special thanks to certain people. List the rest of the people you would like to thank.

(Sample Title Page)

The Edwin P. McCabe Honors Program

Senior Thesis

“Does Seed Size Affect the Rate of Germination and
Early Seedling Growth in Hairy Vetch?”

Joy Epko

May 2004

Langston University
Langston, Oklahoma

(Sample Signature Page-one original is needed)

Does Seed Size Affect the Rate of Germination and Early
Seedling Growth in Hairy Vetch?

By
Joy Epko

Thesis Approved:

Chair Signature

Thesis Committee Chair

Committee Signature

Thesis Committee Member

Kyle Gregory

Honors Program Director/Coordinator Signature