

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA**

**HONORS PROGRAM**

**HONORS SENIOR PROJECT GUIDANCE**

**2007 - 2008**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The USA Honors Program acknowledges and appreciates the significant contributions of other more mature honors programs and colleges throughout the country that have provided models, suggestions and format for various aspects of the youthful USA Program. Deans, directors and honors faculty have been generous and forthcoming in assisting whenever asked. This document reflects the unique features and philosophy of the USA Honors Program, as well as the successful approaches of those honors programs and colleges that have preceded USA in implementation of similar endeavors.

In particular, programs at the University of Mississippi, Villanova University, Lynchburg College, Arizona State University, Abilene Christian University, East Tennessee State University, Kent State University and James Madison University have provided insight and useful guidance related to honors senior projects. Their willingness to share documents, offer helpful workshops at national meetings and answer myriad questions is acknowledged and lauded.

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# **HONORS SENIOR PROJECT GUIDANCE**

## **UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA**

### **GENERAL**

The capstone experience of the USA Honors Program is the Senior Honors Project. This program requirement provides the student an opportunity to apply the knowledge base and tools of the discipline in a mentored scholarly exploration suitable to the student's academic interest and background. Most projects will be at least two semesters in length and may earn up to six (6) hours of credit toward the degree. Students are required to enroll in "Honors Senior Project" within the appropriate academic department or program (course may be repeated for a maximum of six cumulative hours). Satisfactory completion of all projects includes a professional defense, a public presentation of the project (e.g., paper reading, recital, exhibition) at the annual Honors Senior Showcase, and a written presentation (thesis) in the style and format acceptable to the discipline.

### **Philosophy**

The honors senior project and thesis is both an opportunity and a challenge. Certainly the completion of this requirement looks good on your resume and may enhance your competitiveness for graduate or professional schools or career opportunities. The effort will provide an apprenticeship in professional knowledge and skills that will have pragmatic benefits later. But the work is important and worthy most of all because of the intellectual and creative process in which it engages you personally. Choosing and pursuing a topic to which your curiosity and ambition have led you, working closely with a professional expert, doing sustained work of significant scope and substance, learning more about your discipline and subject, but also about your own capabilities--all make this experience unusual and rewarding. To insure that this experience is the best it can be, we hold out high expectations, provide intellectual support and guidance along the way, and look forward to celebrating your success. However, the main responsibility for success and personal satisfaction is upon you, the student. The more serious your commitment and effort, the greater your achievement will be.

### **Eligibility**

In order to enroll in Honors Senior Project students must have a minimum of 90 semester hours of university credit, have a minimum 3.5 GPA and be in good standing in the USA Honors Program. A final Project Prospectus approved by the mentor and project committee must be on file in the Honors Office at least two weeks prior to the first day of class in which the student initially enrolls in Honors Senior Project.

## **Types of Projects**

Senior projects and theses may take many forms: traditional narrative/analysis of a topic, in-depth study of specific texts, empirical research, practical applications, or a creative effort. Students should possess some background knowledge and any essential methodological skills prior to embarking on the thesis. The final paper should place the specific topic in a broader scholarly context by exhibiting familiarity with other literature on the subject. Projects involving empirical research should develop a testable hypothesis, design and conduct a study to test it, and analyze the results in an appropriate manner.

## **Thesis**

All honors senior projects require a final thesis based upon the project. The honors thesis reports (in the accepted style of its subject matter) the results of project activity, whether it is meditative, experimental, archival, exploratory, analytical or aesthetically creative. The report presents and evaluates the activity on which it is based.

## **Project Scope and Thesis Length**

In general, the honors senior project should be significantly more substantial than an in-course project and paper but something less than a Master's thesis project. The project and thesis should be original in conception and analysis. Originality, however, need not mean the discovery of new knowledge, but can be reflected in the questions posed, the approach, the analysis or synthesis formed, or the organization and presentation. Theses should be the result of serious research, original thinking or creative activity, and a clear understanding of the topic. Since in-depth, comprehensive projects are preferable to broad projects, topics should be feasible in terms of the student's competencies and the time available.

A creative project or applied project is appropriate for many students in engineering, computer sciences, the visual and performing arts and communication. Some students in these programs may prefer writing a traditional thesis; students in other colleges may also opt for a creative project. A creative project must be documented by both expository text and appropriate evidence of the work submitted (slides, audio and/or videotape, etc.). The thesis should describe the process involved in the work's production and, as appropriate, offer an analysis of or commentary on that work. This writing assumes the function of an exhibition catalogue, narrative program, or comparable supporting document and will be evaluated as an integral part of the project. The decision for a creative project or thesis rests with the individual department and, particularly, the mentor and student in consultation with each other.

Senior project thesis length should be determined by what is appropriate for the particular subject. Theses using Social Science methodology typically range from 20 to 60 pages; those in the Humanities from 60 to 80 pages; and theses in the Natural/Mathematical Sciences typically have been 10 to 30 pages. Theses representing

creative projects vary depending upon the nature of the topic and approach, but must be adequate to the present the work and provide analysis and context for the project results.

### **Credit Hours/Credit Toward Degree**

Experience indicates that successful projects and theses in most disciplines require more than one semester to complete. The standard expectation in the USA Honors Program is that students will enroll for Senior Honors Project for two semesters and six hours of credit, but three hours in Directed Studies/Research may also be acceptable. For some projects and to meet some departmental requirements, students may actually conduct aspects of the project and thesis completion over a longer period and start prior to the senior year. Earlier additional enrollment in Directed Studies/Research may be desirable to develop methods and skills and prepare the project prospectus.

In some disciplines it may be acceptable to conduct and complete the senior project and thesis in less than two semesters. Approval to take less than six hours of Senior Honors Project, and/or completion in less than two semesters, must be given in advance by the Honors Director and will be based upon the recommendation of the project mentor and justification in the Project Prospectus. Students with senior projects of less than two semester's duration must take an additional three hours (nine hours total) of honors electives.

Senior Honors Project and thesis are requirements of the USA Honors Program and not of the individual departments. Therefore, the department must determine if and how credit earned for Senior Honors Projects will count toward degree requirements. Each student should discuss this with the mentor and academic advisor and have a clear understanding of how this honors requirement may fit into the plan of study for the major and degree.

### **Grading**

The project mentor, who may elect to consult with project committee members to determine the grade, will assign grades for senior projects. Each semester of enrollment in Senior Honors Project is graded independently with a letter grade. The student must receive a "B" or better first term to enroll in Honors Senior Project for the second term. A progress report in memo form and initialed by the mentor must be submitted to the Honors Director in the first week of the second term. A student who does not make a "B" or better or who is not judged to be making satisfactory progress in the first term must meet jointly with the faculty mentor and Honors Director to determine if the student remains in the program, and if the student does remain in the Program, then the meeting will also seek to determine an appropriate strategy for Senior Project success. Students who are not allowed to continue the project will lose their honors scholarship for the remainder of their studies.

A minimum grade of "B" in each term of Senior Honors Project is required to graduate with University Honors.

## **Defense**

The honors senior thesis and findings/products of the project will be “defended” to the mentor, committee and Honors Director in a manner suitable to the project and acceptable within the discipline. The mentor and student will arrange a time and place for the defense agreeable to the committee members. The defense should occur at least 10 days before the last day of classes within the term. The department chairman and Honors Director must be notified of the defense date, time, and location at least two weeks prior to the defense. Defenses will be open to all who wish to attend and must be advertised adequately.

## **Public Presentation – Honors Senior Showcase**

Some of the graduating honors students will be selected by the Director of the Honors Program to present a brief oral summary or poster of her/his project at a recognition event, the Honors Senior Showcase. Projects involving performances, exhibitions, physical products or other formats not easily summarized orally or as posters will be represented by excerpts or displayed selections from the final project outcome. All faculty mentors, committee members, honors students and senior parents will be invited to the Showcase. To conclude the Showcase, graduating seniors will receive honors academic regalia to be worn at commencement. The Showcase will be followed by a reception congratulating the seniors on their achievements. The Showcase will be scheduled for the day before University Commencement.

## **Suggested Time Table**

**Sophomore Year** - Sophomores should begin to explore possible project topics and faculty mentors. The Honors Director will meet with rising juniors late in the spring semester to provide an overview of the Honors Senior Project, detail timelines and offer guidance in selection of projects and faculty mentors and committee members. An Honors Plan of Study Form (see appendix) must be completed and submitted to the Honors Director by the end of the second full week in April. Information required in the Plan includes anticipated date of graduation and area (discipline) in which the student intends to pursue the senior project. If the student anticipates an early (less than eight semesters) or late (greater than eight semesters) graduation, the Director will need to be informed for scheduling purposes.

**Junior Year** - By the end of the first semester of the junior year, students should have the commitment of a faculty mentor for the senior project and a general idea of the project focus. Juniors will enroll in HON 301 in either the fall or spring semester and will be graded on completion of a Project Prospectus. The final approved Prospectus must be submitted to the Director two weeks prior to the first day of classes in the first semester of the senior year in order for the student to continue with the project by enrolling for Honors Senior Research credit (the 499-designation in each student’s major or department of each student’s thesis mentor). Note, that in some departments (e.g., Biology), a draft prospectus is required by the department at an earlier date.

**Senior Year** – In general, the senior project will be conducted during both semesters of the senior year. The bulk of the research or project work should be completed in the first semester and the second semester devoted to thesis preparation and production of all project materials for the defense. A progress report in memo form and initialed by the mentor must be submitted to the Honors Director in the first week of the second term. Drafts of the thesis, or its components should be reviewed by the mentor and committee and revised by the student several times during the second semester. The final draft is due to the mentor, the committee and the Honors Director at least two weeks before the defense and the defense must take place at least 10 days before the last class day. As already noted, the Showcase will be scheduled for the day before University Commencement. Approved theses and changes of “P” grades in Senior Honors Projects must be submitted prior to graduation in order to graduate with USA Honors. Therefore, all seniors seeking to graduate with USA Honors must submit their revised, completed thesis with appropriate signatures from the Mentor and committee members (plus the requisite number of signed copies) to the Honors Director no later than 3 days before the last class day.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

***Can I combine the Senior Honors Project with another project required for my major (e.g., Engineering, Computer and Information Sciences, Art)?***

Yes, but additional work must be done beyond that expected of all students in your degree program. This may mean a more extensive or in-depth project scope, or greater originality or independence in design and conduct of the project. The Project Prospectus should clearly indicate why the scope merits an “honors” designation.

***What if group projects are required in my major?***

In some cases it may be necessary to conduct an additional project to satisfy the requirements of the Honors Program. However, in many cases group projects may be acceptable. Honors students would be expected to take a significant leadership role in a group project, focus and expand on some area or areas of the group project, or continue the project beyond the scope of the group effort. The Project Prospectus should clearly indicate what additional work that an honors student is doing to merit designation as an honors project and how the honors thesis will reflect the work of the honors student.

***How do I cover additional expenses associated with doing an Honors Senior Project?***

The student is expected to pay for routine expenses related to the acquisition of reference materials, typing, copying/printing and preparation of any special materials (i.e., slides, videos). Extraordinary expenses incurred in conduct of the project (i.e., equipment, expendable supplies, travel) may often be supported by the academic department or grants and contracts to the faculty mentor. Experienced mentors also have acquired skills at “scrounging” resources that may be useful to the student! Anticipated project costs should be detailed in the Project Prospectus with the indication of sources of funding and where support is not available.

## **PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND PROSPECTUS**

### **Getting Started – First Steps**

Although the honors thesis/creative project is usually part of the student's final year, it is the culmination of an entire undergraduate course of study. Therefore, you should be open to possible directions for your thesis/creative project from the beginning of your academic career. Every class and instructor has the potential to open for you an area of interest that might become an avenue to the thesis/creative project. You should be alert to the possibilities. If something you hear, read or experience in conjunction with a particular class excites your interest, take the time to discuss with the professor whether or not this topic would lend itself to a thesis or creative project. That professor might be delighted at the prospect of having a bright, motivated student work with him or her on research in that field. You might be able to get an early start on your thesis/creative project and accumulate honors research credit throughout your years at USA. Opportunities may also arise through student assistantships and undergraduate research programs to initiate independent pursuit of a thesis project. Opportunities may also occur that provide you a research project and student employment at the same time.

### **Your Topic**

You will probably base your thesis or creative project on an aspect of your coursework that piqued your interest. A topic often emerges from a solid background in a specific subject. It is a good idea to take two or three courses that concentrate in a specific area. For example, if your interest is the French Revolution, prepare by taking course offerings having to do with French history and Early Modern Europe before you begin your research.

Topics can also arise from a faculty members' ongoing research, especially in the sciences where students are involved in laboratory work. Find time to learn what faculty members are doing in your discipline. Make appointments with those that interest you and explore compatible interests. Visit the annual poster presentations of the Undergraduate Research Program and the faculty and graduates student Research Forum to see who is doing what.

### **The Project Mentor**

Students will select a Project Mentor from the faculty. The mentor must be a USA faculty member from the discipline in which the student will conduct the project and write the thesis. In some cases, it may be desirable to establish a mentor relationship with more than one faculty member (e.g., multi- or interdisciplinary projects). The Honors Program Director, the student's academic advisor, the department chairperson, or others can provide assistance in selection of the mentor, as appropriate. Share this guidance document with potential mentors and make sure they have the time and

commitment to advise you in your project. The mentor relationship should be established no later than the first semester of the student's junior year. In some disciplines (e.g., Biology) departmental requirements may dictate an earlier selection of a mentor. Students must provide a memo of commitment to the Honors Director from the faculty mentor.

The mentor will be responsible for assisting the student in project design and implementation, preparation of the project prospectus, development of necessary methods and skills, providing guidance in professional ethics and integrity, analysis of results, preparation of the final presentation, and final evaluation of the project. The mentor will assign the final grade for each instance of enrollment in Honors Senior Project, unless departmental guidelines direct otherwise (e.g., Biomedical Sciences).

The mentor and student should schedule regular meetings during the conduct of the project and completion of the thesis. To insure adequate progress and guidance, it is recommended that meetings be held at least every two weeks. Even if the student has nothing to "show" for the two weeks, they should still discuss problems encountered, anticipated progress for the next two weeks and update the mentor on what efforts have transpired in the intervening two weeks. The mentor is not (or should not be) someone who comments occasionally and signs off on the final product but a person who truly advises and directs the student's work.

### **The Thesis Committee**

Together, the student and mentor will select two additional faculty members to provide additional assistance, especially in evaluation of the project results. It is desirable that committee members be selected on the basis of their potential to contribute to some aspect of the project, analysis of results and/or preparation of the project products. Committee members may be from the same department as the project mentor or from other departments. In some cases, it may be appropriate to have a committee member who is not a USA faculty member. Such appointments must have the approval of the Honors Director. The mentor will provide a memo signed by the committee members indicating their willingness to serve and assist with the project. The committee should meet with the student and mentor at least once to review the project prospectus and at least once each semester during conduct of the project. The committee, the mentor and the Honors Director will conduct the project defense and evaluate the quality of the work. Committee members may assist the mentor if requested in determination of the final grade.

### **HON 301 – Introduction to Senior Honors Thesis (One semester hour credit)**

Each student is required to enroll in HON 301 during the first semester of the junior year (usually the spring). In rare cases, students anticipating graduation other than at the end of spring semester may have to arrange to take HON 301 in the fall semester of their junior year. The need for this alternative scheduling should be clearly noted in the Honors Plan of Study developed late in the sophomore year and the student is responsible for making arrangements with the Honors Director. Students in academic programs that

require significant coursework in professional research methods may petition the Honors Director to substitute for HON 301. Approval will be on a case by case basis.

This course is designed to introduce juniors in the USA Honors Program to the methods and philosophy of scholarly research and creative activities in diverse disciplines, and to prepare them for their specific Honors Senior Project. The primary student assignment throughout the course will be a guided development of an approved Senior Project Prospectus. In support of the prospectus development, students will make oral presentations and prepare each component of the prospectus for mentor, instructor and peer review. Revisions will be compiled in the final document.

Course objectives are:

- To widen your perspective of research and creative pursuits, including alternative approaches and methodologies of different disciplines;
- To acquire a deeper understanding of your academic discipline in order to design a new but realistic project with an appropriate research or creative design;
- To develop familiarity with library and other resources in your discipline;
- To explore and discuss issues of professional integrity and ethics;
- To become comfortable with the basic process of research and writing in your discipline, which includes several stages including multiple revisions;
- To gain experience in presentation and defense of your design and approach;
- To acquire skills in probing relevant questions, sharing critical comments, reviewing earlier findings and addressing new issues in the context of peer review;
- To formalize the "nuts and bolts" of your Honors Senior Project; and
- To complete an Honors Senior Project Prospectus approved by your project mentor and the Honors Director.

The class will meet once weekly for one hour. You will be given a schedule of class topics, activities and speakers. In addition to class meeting times, you are required to meet with the instructor at least once during the course and with your mentor regularly to review each written assignment. Attendance and participation is required at all scheduled activities.

### **Library Resources**

Both the University Library and the Biomedical Library provide Bibliographic Reference Librarians to assist with research and guide students in the use of appropriate research tools and reference resources. In some cases the Library must assign user ID's or log-ins to electronic resources. Electronic document delivery and inter-library loan services may be required to obtain essential reference materials. You should determine which of the Reference Librarians specializes in your discipline area and make an appointment to discuss the needs of your project. Your faculty mentor and other

committee members can also provide invaluable guidance in locating primary literature sources and recommending the standard journals in your discipline.

### **Honors Project Prospectus**

No later than the end of the student's junior year, a penultimate draft of the Project Prospectus, approved by the mentor, must be submitted to the Honors Director. The Honors Director must receive the final Project Prospectus no later than two weeks prior to the first day of classes in the first term in which the student enrolls in Honors Senior Project (usually the fall). Failure to meet the deadline for submission of the final approved Project Prospectus will result in suspension of the honors scholarship for the student's fourth year.

The Project Prospectus represents the project plan and will serve as a "contract" for conduct, completion and evaluation of the project. Although a binding agreement, the prospectus may be modified or amended, as required, to accommodate unexpected results, new opportunities or techniques, or other circumstances. The student, the mentor and the Director must agree upon changes to the prospectus. In general, the prospectus should contain the following elements, which will also serve as a template and starting point for the final written presentation of the project.

- Title/Approval page
- Abstract
- Background or Introduction: a presentation of the context and rationale for the project focus. This section should be supported by appropriate citations from the primary literature in a style and format customary to the discipline.
- Project Hypothesis(es), Thesis, Problem Statement, or Goals and Objectives - clearly present the focus of the project.
- Methods or Approach: how will you investigate and test the hypothesis or achieve the objectives? Must be detailed and thorough. Should include citations from the literature, as appropriate.
- Project Outcome: what are anticipated results or the scholarly product of the project? What will be the format of the defense? What will be the format of the public presentation (paper presentation, performance, reading, exhibition, etc.)?
- Bibliography of "References Cited" in a style and format appropriate to the discipline. Additional references (i.e., "Works Consulted") may be included as an appendix.
- Project Timeline: provide a reasonable calendar outline of project specific benchmarks, achievements and completion. This should be extensive and not just Honors Program deadlines.
- Resource Needs: include supplies and materials, equipment, space, logistical support, postage, travel, extensive copying costs, and any other requirements necessary to complete and present the project. Indicate those that will be provided by the mentor or academic unit and those that are not currently available. If financial support is required, provide a detailed budget.

## SENIOR HONORS PROJECT THESIS

There may be more information here than is needed, but theses can contain so many different elements (tables, photographs, figures, etc.) that it is best to cover all possible questions. Questions of style and specific content should be addressed to the project mentor and committee. You should also consult with your mentor to determine if the Department has its own guidance document to supplement this document.

### Style Manual

A style manual tells you the correct form of footnotes, bibliographies, tables of contents, title pages, etc., for your discipline. Every discipline uses a different style manual. Common manuals include the *Modern Language Association (MLA) Handbook* for English, the *Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA)* for Psychology and the *Accounting Review Style Manual*. You should find out from your mentor which manual your discipline uses as soon as possible and consider formatting issues as you gather data and compile materials for your thesis. In many cases, you may be directed to consult a respected journal in your discipline to use as a style guide instead of a 'style manual'.

### Paper

All final, approved official copies (3) submitted to the Honors Program must be on twenty pound white 8.5" x 11" bond paper of at least 25% cotton content for archival purposes. Students can take a laser-printed (no inkjet or dot matrix) version of the thesis to one of the local copy centers to have it copied onto the bond paper. **N.B.** The signature page must also be of the same cotton paper and all official copies must bear original signatures.

### Margins

The left margin for the entire thesis must be 1.5 inches to accommodate the binding of the thesis. The bottom and right margins should be 1 inch (except for page numbers). The top margin generally will be 1 inch except for the first page of each text section and others as noted in the description of the Required Elements below.

### Fonts

Choose an easy to read serif, proportional font such as Times New Roman, CG Times or Century Schoolbook. Text size should be set at 12 points. A reduced size of font may be necessary in some tables to achieve "fit." If you will need to align lists or columns of numbers, choose Courier, a fixed-space font. The same font type must be used throughout the thesis.

## Line Spacing

Most sections of the front matter are single-spaced (see each section description for details). Titles/headings that are longer than one line may be single-spaced within the text and within the Table of Contents. Set line spacing to double-space for all text within the body of the thesis. Depending upon the style manual used, entries in the Bibliography/ References Cited section may be single-spaced or double-spaced. If single-spaced, each should be separated from the next by a double space. If entries are double-spaced, do not double-space between entries.

## Printing, Copying and Binding

The thesis should be printed on a high quality laser printer in black ink. Copies can be made on campus, produced at University Publications or a local copy shop such as Kinko's. Copies should maintain the quality of the original printing and retain all margins. If the thesis contains colored illustrations or images, originals should be used in all copies of the thesis. Original photographs should be dry mounted on the same paper as the rest of the document. Scanned images should be of high resolution and on the same paper.

The required three copies of the thesis should be submitted unbound in clean folders. Be sure and include any plates clearly marked for bound pockets. Three high quality copies of any other attached materials must be submitted at the same time as the thesis document. The Honors Program will arrange for binding and archiving. If the student desires additional copies for the mentor (an expected courtesy), committee members or family, they must arrange separately for binding these copies and provide a check made out to the Honors Program in the amount of \$10 for each additional bound copy. Additional copies may be on any quality of paper, at the student's discretion.

## Required or (Optional) Elements

Below is a list of required and some optional elements for each thesis. Required elements are underlined; possible optional elements are in parentheses. Explanations of each element follow the list.

**A. Front Matter** – paginated consecutively with lower case roman numerals centered 1" above the bottom of the page

Title/Approval Page (counted as page one but not numbered, begin with "ii" after this page)

(Copyright Page)

(Dedication Page)

Acknowledgements (minimum requirements specified later)

Abstract

(Preface)

Table of Contents

List of Tables (If used)

List of Figures (If used)

List of Symbols and/or Abbreviations (If needed)

**B. Body of Thesis** – paginated consecutively with Arabic numerals centered, 1” from the bottom of the first page of each section and at the upper right margin on all other pages.

Appropriate Text Sections or Chapters

Bibliography/List of References/References Cited

Appendices (If needed)

**C. (Special Additional Content – slides, videos, tapes, etc.)** – best quality, minimum of three sets

### **A. Front Matter**

**1. Title/Approval Page:** All final copies of the thesis submitted to the Honors Program must have a title page with signature lines following the format and including the text shown in the sample (see appendix). Because you will bring this page (three copies) to your defense (for the signatures) be sure it is on the same brand and weight of cotton paper and in the same typeface as the remainder of the thesis. The number of signature lines must equal the number of committee members (minimum of three including the mentor) plus an additional line for the signature of the Honors Program Director. You should provide enough copies to allow for an original signed page for each (3) final official manuscript.

Single-space all text on the title page. The full title is centered three inches from the top of the page in 14-point font. The remainder of the text of the page is in 12-point font and centered. After the title are blank lines, the word “by”, then a double space line to the author’s full name, then five spaces to the statement “A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the University of South Alabama Honors Program and the Bachelor of Arts (*Fine Arts or Sciences*) degree in *title of major*. Triple line spaces to the word “Mobile” and a double line space to the month and year of graduation (see sample in the appendix).

The title page is assigned Roman number "i," although the number does not appear on the page. The date used is the month and year of commencement.

**2. Copyright Page:** While not a required page, you may want to include a copyright page to protect your work. If you include a copyright page, it is page ii. See appendix for a sample.

3. **Dedication Page:** If the student wishes to dedicate the manuscript, the dedication statement is included at this point. Begin with DEDICATION centered and 2” from the top of the page. The dedication should begin three lines below the heading and may be single-spaced.
4. **Acknowledgements:** Although optional, it is generally a professional courtesy to thank those who have helped in the process of completing the thesis. Permissions to quote copyrighted material must be listed here, as well as acknowledgments for grants and special funding. Begin with ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS centered and 2” from the top of the page. The text of the acknowledgements begins three lines below the heading and should be single-spaced.

Each USA Honors Senior Thesis must contain the following text in the Acknowledgement section.

“This project was supported in part by a Whiddon Scholar Honors Scholarship funded by the University of South Alabama Foundation.”

5. **Abstract:** Each thesis must have an abstract. Although the content can vary, the following information is appropriate: (1) a short statement concerning the area of investigation; (2) a brief discussion of methods and procedures used in gathering the data; (3) a condensed summary of the findings; (4) conclusions reached in the study. The abstract should be no more than 350 words. The thesis abstract for creative projects should follow a similar approach although content areas may vary slightly as appropriate to the discipline. The text of the Abstract should be single-spaced and begins three lines below the heading.
6. **Preface:** A personal statement about the thesis project would be included in a preface. The tone of a preface, however, must be academic and appropriate to a scholarly work. The preface can be single-spaced.
7. **Table of Contents:** The Table of Contents may vary in style and amount of information included. Chapter or Section titles, the Bibliography or List of References, and the Appendix (es), if any, must be included. Although it is not necessary to include all levels of headings, inclusion must be consistent. If a particular level is included at any point, all headings of that level must be included. Wording should be identical to the body of the thesis.
8. **List of Tables and/or List of Figures:** A List of Tables and/or Figures should be included if used in the manuscript. Each list begins on a separate page with the heading centered, 2” from the top of the page. Any tables or figures appearing in an appendix are also included in the

appropriate list. Each title should be different from the other titles, and all titles entered in the lists must be worded exactly as they appear on the table or figure. Additional explanatory information need not be included in the list. See appendix for a sample.

- 9. List of Symbols and/or Abbreviations:** The title of this material should reflect its content and may be included to define specialized terms or symbols. See appendix for a sample.

**B. Body of Thesis** - (paginated consecutively with Arabic numbers centered 1” from the bottom on chapter/section beginning pages and at the upper right margin, 1” from the top of all other pages).

The manuscript should be divided into a logical scheme that is followed consistently throughout the work. Chapters are a common major division, but sections (i.e., Introduction, Methods, Conclusions) and parts are also permissible. Each chapter or section must be paginated consecutively and begin on a new page. The first page of each chapter should begin 2 inches from the top of the page, with the top margin of the other pages being one inch. The text of the body should be double-spaced.

**Subdivisions:** Any logical system of subdivision within chapters or sections is permissible, but the scheme must be consistent throughout the manuscript. The appearance of the heading must vary for each level of subdivision unless a numbering system is used to indicate level. The subdivisions within a chapter or section do not begin on a new page unless the preceding page is filled. If there is not room for the complete heading and at least two lines of text at the bottom of a page, the new subdivision should begin on the next page. First and second level subdivisions are always preceded by extra space to indicate to the reader a major shift in subject. Any levels of subdivision below the first two are not required to have extra space above but must be treated consistently.

**1. Citation of Sources:** Notes documenting the text and corresponding to superscripted numbers in the text are called footnotes when they are printed at the bottom of the page (Chicago Manual of Style, p. 405). This format is only used occasionally and has generally been replaced by references. References usually consist of sources of information in parentheses or square brackets within the text. Three common methods of reference are (1) to use MLA documentation, as in (Smith 27), (2) to use author's name and date of publication, as in (Smith, 1990), or (3) to assign numbers to the bibliographical entries and insert the corresponding number for the authors as they are cited in the text, as in Smith (95). The purpose of references is to guide the reader to the corresponding entry in the List of References or Bibliography, where complete information is available. The form, style, and content of footnotes or reference notes should be determined by what is generally accepted in the field of study, using a professional journal or style manual as a guide.

**2. Tables and Figures:** Since tables and figures are separate entities, they must be numbered independently. Each table or figure must have a unique title descriptive of its contents. This title appears at the top of the table and at the bottom of the figure. No two tables or figures may have exactly the same title. The formatting of the titles must be consistent for all tables and figures.

**Numbering:** Tables and Figures should be numbered and presented in the order in which they occur in the body of the text. Tables and figures may be numbered in one of several ways. Three of the most common numbering schemes are (1) to number consecutively throughout the manuscript, including the appendix, using either Roman or Arabic numerals; (2) to number consecutively within chapters or sections, with a prefix designating the chapter/section (e.g., 3-1, 3-2 ... 4-1, 4-2). Appendix tables or figures would use a prefix of A for Appendix or a prefix designating the specific appendix (e.g., A-1, A-2 or A-1, B-1, B-2); or (3) to establish a consecutive numbering system for the body of the manuscript and a different one for the appendix (e.g., 1, 2, 3 for text and A-1, A-2, A-3 for appendix). The style of numbering must be consistent.

**Placement within the body of the manuscript:** Each table or figure should immediately follow the page on which it is first mentioned (except as noted in the next paragraph) and all tables and figures must be referred to by number, not by expressions such as "the following table/figure." When more than one table or figure is introduced on a page of text, each follows in the order mentioned. It is recommended that tables and figures be assigned pages separate from the text to avoid problems in shifting during last-minute revisions. In degree of importance, tables and figures are secondary to the text so that the text dictates where the tables or figures are placed. All pages must be filled with text and in no case should a page be left significantly short because of the mention of a table or figure. If multiple tables or figures are mentioned together on a page, they may be placed on pages together, provided there is approximately ½ inch between each.

A table or figure less than one-half page in length (approximately 4 inches) may be incorporated within the text, provided it appears in the proper order as the other tables or figures, it is separated from the text by extra space (approximately ½ inch), it does not continue onto a following page, and that it follows its specific mention in the text.

It is not necessary to designate as figures small diagrams within the text, or to designate as formal tables compilations which are no more than a few lines in length.

**Horizontal tables and figures:** To accommodate large tables or figures, it is sometimes necessary to place them in horizontal (landscape) orientation on the page. The margin at the binding edge must still be 1½ inches, and all other margins at least 1 inch. The margin at the top of the page and the placement of the page number must be consistent with the rest of the thesis. The table or figure and

its captions will be placed so that they can be read when the thesis is turned 90 degrees clockwise.

***Typeface for tables:*** The typeface used for the manuscript must be used for tables. The size of the type may differ within the table, depending on the "fit" of the information within the margins. Because of the type requirements for the tables, it is seldom possible to use a table from another source "as is" so most must be retyped.

Since tables consist of tabulated material or columns, the use of ruling or lines in tables helps the reader distinguish the various parts of the table. Tables may be continued on as many pages as necessary, provided the column headings remain the same and are repeated for each page. The table title is not repeated, but continuation pages are indicated with the designation: Table \_\_\_\_ (continued). Tables too large to fit within margins may be reduced.

***Table titles:*** Titles should be succinct but adequate to understand the table if it were presented or used alone and not within the thesis. For example: "Comparisons of test scores of control and experimental classrooms indicating gender differences" not "Comparisons of test scores". In addition to the title, it may be necessary to include explanatory information in the caption of the table. It is not necessary to include the explanatory portion in the Table of Contents.

***Table footnotes:*** Footnotes to tables consist of four different categories: (1) source notes, (2) general notes, (3) notes to specific parts of the table indicated by superscripts, and (4) notes on level of probability.

If the table or data within the table are taken from another source, the word Source(s): is used, followed by the full reference citation, regardless of the format for referencing used in the main body of the text. This ensures that if an interested reader excerpts that specific page, all bibliographic information is contained within the page. All references must also be included in the List of References Cited or Bibliography.

***Typeface for figures:*** Since figures are considered illustrations, regardless of the nature of their content, any print that is part of the figure can be in any typeface, provided it is neat and legible. The figure title (or caption) and page number must be in the same typeface as the rest of the manuscript because this material is considered to be part of the typeset body of the manuscript.

***Figure captions/titles:*** Titles should be succinct but adequate to understand the figure if it were presented or used alone and not within the thesis. For example: "Comparisons of test scores of control and experimental classrooms indicating gender differences" not "Comparisons of test scores". In addition to the title, it may be necessary to include explanatory information in the caption of the

figure. It is not necessary to include the explanatory portion in the Table of Contents.

**Legends:** Explanatory material for figures may be placed within the figure, either above or below the title, or continued after the period following the title.

**Continued figures:** A figure containing several related parts too large to be included on a page may be continued onto other pages. The first page contains the figure number and complete title, and subsequent pages contain the remainder of the figure and the designation: Figure \_\_\_\_ (continued).

**Figure footnotes:** Footnotes are placed below the figure title but are not separated by a dividing line. If the figure or information within the figure is taken from another source, the word Source(s): is used, followed by the full reference citation, regardless of the format for referencing used in the main body of the text. This ensures that if any page is excerpted by an interested reader, all bibliographic information is contained within the page. If changes are made in a figure from another source, this is indicated by using the phrase "Adapted from ...." All references must be included in the Bibliography or List of References Cited.

**3. Plates:** Plates are a special category consisting of pages of related figures, multiple photographs or material that because of its size (i.e., blueprints, wiring diagrams) cannot be bound into the manuscript in the normal binding process. Following are the most frequently used methods of including plates:

Printed as full-page 8 ½ x 11 inch photographs on double-weight glossy paper preceded by a legend page; affixed with appropriate legend to the required paper with a permanent spray mount adhesive; or copied/printed on large format archival-quality paper (not necessarily the required paper) and folded. Plates are placed in a pocket attached to the inside back cover of the manuscript at the bindery.

Plates must be mentioned in the text by number. The plate numbers and order in the pocket then follow the order of first mention. Since plates may be composed of multiple figures or parts, all parts of each plate may be discussed in any manner the writer desires without further referencing once the plate is mentioned.

**4. Bibliography or List of References or References Cited:** A thesis must include a list of materials used in the preparation of the manuscript. This may consist only of references cited in the text, tables and figures (List of References or References Cited) or it may include all works consulted (Bibliography). A numbered page with the title—BIBLIOGRAPHY or LIST OF REFERENCES—centered vertically and horizontally, precedes the list. The purpose of listing the citations is threefold: (1) to serve as an acknowledgment of

sources, (2) to give readers sufficient information to locate the source, and (3) in the case of personal interviews or correspondence, to save readers the trouble of attempting to locate material that is not available.

The format for the citations should be consistent with the appropriate style manual.

Additional references not cited in the body of the thesis may be included as an appendix (i.e., “Works Consulted” or “Additional References”).

**5. Appendix:** A numbered page with the designation APPENDIX or APPENDICES centered vertically and horizontally between the margins, if included, precedes an appendix. Original data and supplementary materials are usually placed in an appendix. In some cases, all tables, figures and/or plates are moved to the appendix to avoid interrupting text. Appendices may also be used to incorporate questionnaires or surveys used to gather information.

### **C. Special Additional Materials**

Some projects, especially creative projects, may result in the production of materials that cannot be physically bound or otherwise contained within the thesis document. Examples may include photographic slides, videos, audiotapes and working models. These should be noted in the Table of Contents of the thesis as “Attachments” and each clearly named/titled and the type of material indicated (e.g., “Art Exhibition Slide Catalog of Jane Doe, May 2002 – twenty-seven 35mm slides in archival sleeves”). High quality copies of all material must be included with each of the three final documents submitted to the Honors Program.

### **Drafts –Review and Approval**

Development of the honors thesis is expected to be an iterative process involving continuous communication between the student and faculty mentor, and often the other committee members. The quality of the final thesis is considerably enhanced by constructive review and revision of drafts. Review may be by chapter or section of the thesis or of the entire document. The student and mentor should agree to a schedule of completion that allows for at least two opportunities to revise the thesis. It is desirable for the mentor to approve a draft before it is submitted to other committee members and the Honors Director, but the entire committee must have at least one opportunity to review the thesis prior to the defense. Students who do not follow this guidance should not be surprised if they have difficulties completing an approvable thesis on time.

At a minimum, the penultimate draft of the thesis must be submitted to the committee and the Honors Director two weeks before the last day of classes of the final semester or two weeks before the defense, whichever is earlier. Grades cannot be submitted until the final approved thesis is submitted. “P” grades must be changed to

letter grades prior to commencement. The final approved thesis must be submitted to the Honors Director no later than 3 days before the last class of the semester in which the student hopes to graduate with USA Honors. Students who fail to meet this deadline will not graduate with USA Honors.

## RESEARCH INTEGRITY AND REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

The following web sites should be consulted for University policies and procedures related to research integrity and regulatory compliance. By reference, these web sites and their content are incorporated as an official part of this guidance document and are requirements, where appropriate, of the Honors Senior Project. If there are questions, please contact the office or University staff person designated for each and your project mentor.

**USA Regulatory Compliance – Including use of human subjects (especially see “decision chart”), and animal care**

<http://southmed.usouthal.edu/com/research/compliance.html>

**Copyright Policy**

[http://www.southalabama.edu/academic affairs/handbook /](http://www.southalabama.edu/academic%20affairs/handbook/)

- Open pp. 191-199

**Conflict of Interest**

**Policy;** <http://www.southalabama.edu/otd/financialconflict.pdf>

**Financial disclosure:** [http://www.southalabama.edu/osp/pdf/fin\\_cnfl.pdf](http://www.southalabama.edu/osp/pdf/fin_cnfl.pdf)

**Disclosure of Relationships with External Entities:**

[http://www.southalabama.edu/osp/pdf/fcfl\\_dis.pdf](http://www.southalabama.edu/osp/pdf/fcfl_dis.pdf)

**Research Integrity**

<http://ori.dhhs.gov>

<http://southmed.usouthal.edu/com/research/ResearchConduct/instruction.htm>

## THESIS SECTION SAMPLES

# Regulation of the Interleukin-1 Receptor Antagonist

by  
Mary Jane Doe

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the University of South Alabama Honors Program and the Bachelor of *Arts (Fine Arts, or Sciences)* degree in *title of major*.

Mobile  
May 2001 (month/year of commencement)

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ABSTRACT  
JOSEPH PAUL SMITH: A History of the Choctaw Indian Nation in Mississippi  
(Under the direction of Mary Shaw)

[The abstract should be single-spaced and should be no longer than 350 words.]

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACD	acid/citrate/dextrose
ADA	Adenosine deaminase
AUC	fibroblast line GM0328
BSA	bovine serum albumin
C41	control fibroblast line
C53	control fibroblast line
CAA	carbamyl aspartate
cDNA	complementary DNA
CRM	cross-reacting material
DHO	dihydroorotate
DIT	dithiothreitol
EBV	Epstein-Barr virus
HEPES	4-(2-hydroxyethyl)-1 piperazineethanesulfonic acid
HTC	rat hepatoma cell line
kd	degradation rate constant
Ki	inhibition constant
mAb	monoclonal antibody
MLD	metachromatic leukodystrophy
mRNA	messenger RNA
NaN <sub>3</sub>	sodium azide
OMP	orotidine 5' -monophosphate