THE THESIS PROCESS

To complete your EKU Honors requirements, you must complete an honors thesis. The honors thesis is any substantive research or creative production that typically takes a year to complete. The rule of thumb is that the honors thesis should be a minimum of 30 pages long with as many references. Most theses should exceed this minimum, but much depends upon the expectations of the scholarly discipline in which the thesis is being written. Theses in the humanities and some social sciences, for instance, are customarily longer, while theses in the physical and life sciences are often very close to the thirty-page minimum, with much of the text reflecting observational or lab data that took a considerable amount of work and time to obtain. For those who decide to do a creative thesis, the complexity of your project should be of at least equal substance and your piece should be accompanied by a process or artist’s statement that clearly demonstrates the kind of research and other work that went into the actual creative thesis project. Those statements should be an absolute minimum of 10 pages long, but often are significantly longer, and should contain appropriate scholarly references. All theses require formal presentation at either the fall or spring EKU Honors Thesis Conference; any thesis that utilizes a variant form of documentation or compilation—i.e., video, audio recording, or image of any kind—must upload that documentation as well as the written statement to accompany it on the digital archive.

Each student has three academic terms (not counting summers) to complete their thesis work from the time they start it. Students receive the IP (in progress) placeholder on their transcripts after they successfully complete their interim report at the end of their first semester of thesis work (typically when they are enrolled in the HON 420 course taught by the EKU Honors Program director or other qualified instructor). If the IP is not replaced with a regular letter grade (A-F) by the end of the third semester after they’ve begun thesis, then the IP automatically reverts to an NC, “no credit.” The NC does not affect your GPA but it can affect your financial aid; it is wise, in other words, to check with the Financial Aid office before you make the decision not to complete your honors thesis. For example, if you take the HON 420 course and begin your thesis in the fall of 2015, you will have until the end of fall 2016 to complete the thesis, present its results at an honors thesis conference, and receive a grade on it from your thesis mentor.

The Topic

The thesis can be done in the area of the student’s major or minor, but does not need to be; students with questions about the pros and cons of these options should meet with the director to discuss their individual case.

The Proposal and Honors Thesis Mentor

The process begins with the student submitting an Honors Thesis Proposal Form (available at the EKU Honors webpage under “Current Students” and “Thesis Information”) at the end of the
The student should email the completed proposal form and attached two-page narrative as either a .pdf or a Word document to the mentor. Both student and mentor should type their name and date on the form and save it. The mentor must then forward the form and narrative on to the Honors Director with a cc back to the student. Note—the proposal form and narrative should not be printed. The proposal process is to be done entirely electronically via e-mail attachments.

The Thesis Mentor should pay careful attention to the approximately two-page typed proposal that accompanies the Honors Thesis Proposal Form, focusing on whether the proposal is scholarly, creative, and realistic.

The student and mentor should also carefully consider and agree upon the relative proportion of each of the three components of the project. Please note that three separate grades are used in the Honors Program Outcome Assessment plan; the mentor and student together should decide on how they should be weighted (we suggest that the final product of the thesis itself should count no less than 50% of the total final grade).

While they are completing the thesis, students will register for HON 420 (Thesis Seminar) at least 2 semesters prior to their intended graduation. The first time the student signs up for 420, they will also be enrolled in the thesis support class held that semester taught by the director. This seminar will help the students refine their project, educate them concerning the process of completing a thesis, and support them as they begin this long-term, intense independent research or creative project. All thesis students will invite their mentors to attend the seminar on the day when they present the results of their Interim Report to the class.

The student and mentor should work on the actual thesis project at their convenience and in a manner that best suits the pair.

The Final Product

Each thesis project will consist of: a written thesis (or comparable project), and an oral presentation that highlights the major components of the thesis.

The written thesis should constitute a substantive amount of work (remember that 6 credit hours will be awarded the student at its completion). Again, most theses should run a minimum of 30 pages in length, without notes.
When appropriate, students may submit an alternative to the written thesis. Such exceptions may include the creation of an artistic piece, dance piece, creative composition, or musical composition, as well as any project that creates something—a student-run PR firm, for instance. Alternative formats should be agreed upon by the student, faculty mentor, and Honors Program Director prior to the start of the thesis work. All theses, regardless of format, must be presented during one of the two annual EKU Honors Thesis Conferences, held typically in December and April. The EKU Honors Thesis Conference is open to all and faculty, fellow students, family members, and friends of the presenters are encouraged to attend.

Students can expect to field questions about the thesis project following the presentation. Each student is given a thirty-minute slot. The oral presentation generally lasts twenty minutes, and ten minutes are allowed for questions. Each student presenter will be assigned another student “discussant” who will begin the question and answer session on the presentation. All honors thesis students are honored at our Honors Scholar Convocation in the semester that they graduate.

Grading the Thesis Project

The thesis mentor will assign the grade for HON 420. At the completion of the FIRST semester of 420 for which the honors thesis student registers when the mentor adds his/her signature to the interim report indicating that s/he is satisfied with the student’s progress, the director will assign the student the grade of IP (In Progress) for HON 420. If the student has not been given a completed conventional letter grade by their mentor after three semesters, the IP will revert to the grade of NC (Not Completed). When the thesis is completed, the mentor will assign four grades, one for each portion of the thesis outlined in the Honors Thesis Proposal Form; all grades and final comments will be recorded and submitted on the Honors Program Thesis Evaluation Form. The mentor will then average these grades, based upon the proportions established at the beginning of the thesis project, into one grade for the entire project.

Grades will not be assigned until after the oral presentation portion of the project. All theses are due by a fixed date each semester and are expected to be uploaded to the digital archive at that time. Instructions for students regarding uploading the thesis follow in this handbook, as do instructions for mentors about how to access and grade the thesis using the digital archive. The Honors Director is the instructor of record for all HON 420 students; no thesis student will ever pop up on their mentor’s EKU Direct account. All mentors need to upload their Thesis Evaluation Form to the digital archive by the deadline indicated by the Honors Director so the Honors Director can access them and accurately record the student’s grade by the required deadline.
Additional information

Students should not expect to use a thesis written in completion of their major program for their honors thesis, or vice versa. However, two such theses could be related in certain ways. For example, the honors thesis might be an extension (the next chapter so to speak) of a level thesis or the next logical step in that research.

HONORS THESIS FORMATTING

1. Begin the first page of your text about one third of the way down the page.

2. Margins: Top and bottom margins should be one inch
   - Left margin should be 1 1/2 inches
   - Right margin should be one inch

3. You should use a standard font—Arial, Times New Roman, etc.—and a 12 point font size for the thesis text. Serif fonts are easier for the eye to read; consider using Times New Roman or another serif font.

4. Left justify only.

5. Pages in the front matter (everything that comes before the thesis writing proper) should be numbered with small Roman numerals (i, ii, etc.); pages for the rest of the thesis should be numbered in the top right (flush right) with Arabic numbers. The first page of your text should not be numbered. Begin numbering with page 2. The order of the front matter should be the following:

   Title page (see template below)
   Abstract
   Table of contents
   List of Figures (if any)
   List of Illustrations (if any)
   List of Tables (if any)
   Acknowledgments page

6. All figures included in your thesis—illustrations, tables, graphs, charts, photographs, maps, etc.) need to be listed at the beginning of the thesis (see #4 above for the correct order of front matter), referred to explicitly before they appear in the thesis, numbered, and labeled with a caption of some kind.
7. All photos, illustrations, jpg images, etc. must have the resolutions that will work on the digital archive; we’ll send more info on that separately. If applicable (i.e., you are doing a creative thesis that features a dance performance, other filmed product, or photographed product), you will need to include a CD with all of your images with the hard copy of your thesis that you turn into the EKU Honors Program office. Your films will be uploaded to the archive; separate info on that will be provided as well.

8. Consider including an acknowledgments page. This is your chance to express within the thesis itself your gratitude for the support and help you’ve received while working on it. Professional courtesy requires that you thank your faculty mentor, but you will also undoubtedly find others to whom you wish to express your appreciation for their professional and emotional support.

9. You will also need to write an abstract that summarizes the key questions, findings, and significance of your project. The abstract will be submitted electronically with your thesis and will be searchable via the worldwide web. The abstract should be between 200-250 words, double-spaced, and include your name, your mentor’s name, and your title on the same page. See the Abstract Template below. The abstract is included as part of your front matter; see #4 above.

10. Indent 5 spaces for a paragraph.

11. Double space your text throughout, including the Works Cited or Bibliography page.

12. Label your bibliography appropriately (Works Cited, Bibliography, etc.) Center your page title, but do not underline it or place it inside quotation marks.

13. Select the appropriate style manual for your discipline (Consult your mentor concerning his/her expectations for the discipline):
   A. Humanities: *The MLA Style Manual* (MLA=Modern Language Association)
   B. History: *Chicago Manual of Style* (Turabian)
   E. Chemistry: *ACS Style Guide* (ACS= American Chemical Society)
   F. Physics: *AIP Style Manual* (AIP=American Institute of Physics)
   G. Mathematics: *A Manual for Authors of Mathematical Papers* (published by the American Mathematical Society)

   *Locate the current edition of your discipline’s manual and familiarize yourself with it. Know what it contains and where to look for the information you need for correct documentation. Follow one style exclusively.*
RESEARCH COMPLIANCE: IS YOUR STUDY ETHICAL?

1. Are you compliant with federal regulations? Compliance with federal regulations governing the use of human subjects, animal care, radiation, legend drugs, recombinant DNA, or the handling of hazardous materials in research is monitored by a number of federal agencies. Because of these regulations, research compliance is another area of importance to all researchers including undergraduate honors students. If your research requires approval by one of the university’s ethics committees—the Institutional Review Board for the Study of Human Subjects (IRB) or the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)—both you and your mentor will need to complete the on-line training appropriate for your area of study and file the proposal and paperwork for your project and have it approved by the relevant committee prior to the collection of any data. The number on your approval form from either the IRB or the IACUC will be required for the successful submission of your thesis on EKU’s digital archive, Encompass. The HON 420 class always includes a session on IRB and IACUC approval; if you have any other questions, contact either the Honors Program Director or the Division of Sponsored Programs (www.research.eku.edu/).

2. Thesis research involving human subjects. All research involving human subjects must comply with federal regulations from the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) and the University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of human research subjects. Proposals for research projects involving human subjects must be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to the collection of data. Applications are available on the Sponsored Programs website at http://www.sponsoredprograms.eku.edu/IRB_SITE/. Federal regulations require mandatory training for all researchers, including students writing theses or dissertations. To satisfy this training requirement, EKU requires that all researchers participating in projects involving human subjects complete the National Institutes of Health’s Human Participant Protections Education for Research Teams Tutorial and supply a copy of the certification of completion to the IRB prior to the approval of research protocols. A link to the tutorial is provided on the IRB website.

3. Thesis research involving animal subjects. All research involving animal subjects must be reviewed by and receive approval from the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) prior to the beginning of the research project. The IACUC application and guidelines are available on the Sponsored Programs website at http://www.sponsoredprograms.eku.edu/IACUC/.
EASTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

Paper Title

(Note that the first letter of each important word is capitalized and that the title is not underlined or placed in quotation marks.)

Honors Thesis
Submitted
in Partial Fulfillment
of the
Requirements of HON 420
Spring 2011

By
A Brilliant Student

Mentor
Correct Title and Name
Department or Professional Affiliation
Discovering the People of Africa through National Geographic Magazine

Honors Thesis
Submitted
In Partial Fulfillment
Of The
Requirements of HON 420
Fall 2007

By
Michael Phelps

Faculty Mentor
Dr. David Zurick
Department of Geography and Geology
ABSTRACT TEMPLATE

Title of thesis

Name of thesis author

Name with correct title (Dr., Prof., Mr., Ms., etc.) of thesis mentor and department or professional affiliation

Abstract description: this should run 200-250 words (but no more than 250 words) and it should contain the most relevant information regarding the subject of the thesis, its central investigations and key questions, and its final results. Do not indent the abstract but do double-space it.

Keywords and phrases: you will need to list no less than 5 and no more than 10 of these; these will be the words that are coded and most likely to be picked up in an internet search: e.g., thesis, honors thesis, honors project, capstone, undergraduate research.
GUIDELINES FOR IMAGES

1. Make a copy of your original file. This is what you will edit in preparation for embedding into your document. The changes you will be making to this file are not changes you will want to make to your original file.

If you are using a photograph or images, please upload the original file as an additional file in Encompass Digital Archive. This way, people will be able to download the original high-quality file rather work with a lower quality image in your Word document that will then take too long to download.

2. Recommended file format:
   - JPEG – use for photographs and other images that use a continuous range of color or shades of grey
   - GIF – use for charts, graphs, or other computer-generated images with sharp boundaries between different colors and/or contain text

3. Recommended resolution: 300 dpi/ppi
   This is the print industry standard. Ensures that the image will look good when printed.

4. Image file size: Aim for 500 KB or less. If your file is larger than this, consider reducing it. Remember: don’t do this to your original file!

Make sure you title your image files with names that are easily identifiable: i.e., LastNameFigure2.

Options for reducing file size:
   - Resize – Best to resize by percentage (i.e. choose to reduce the image to 80% of its size)
   - Compress – most image editing software gives you the option to compress your file. This reduces the file size without compromising the image quality. Choose the highest quality setting or make sure to set the dpi to 300 so the image resolution is not affected.

5. PDF or word document? Word documents uploaded to Encompass are automatically converted to PDF. You may upload your documents in the archive as jpg files, but it’s not necessary.
Honors Thesis Student Workflow
(for Honors Thesis Students only)

Go to the Honors Theses section of Encompass Digital Archive (http://encompass.eku.edu/honors_theses/).

Click the “Submit Research” link in the “Author Corner” section of the left hand column.
Fill out the required fields (marked with an asterisk *):

- Email address (use your EKU email)
- Name
- Password

Enter “Eastern Kentucky University” in the “Institutional Affiliation” box.

When you click the “Sign Up” button, the system will send you a confirmation email.
Check your EKU email account for the confirmation request (the sender email will be: support@dc.bepress.com).

Click the provided link to confirm your account.
You will be taken to the “Submission Instructions and Agreement” page.

The distribution option referred to in the submission agreement is the “Restricted Access Thesis” option. This makes your honors thesis accessible to EKU users only, on- and off-campus.

Check the box at the bottom of the page and click “Continue.”
Now you can start entering information about your honors thesis.

**If your honors thesis work is in a different format (such as an image, audio file, video, etc.), you will upload a word document of your title page and abstract, and your process piece, and you will then add the honors thesis project itself as an additional file. The EKU Honors Thesis Handbook has more information about recommended file types and the proper formatting of images. More information on uploading additional files is on page 8.**

Read the instructions for each field; they will tell you what kind of information you should provide in each field, and how to enter it.
Select the appropriate semester from the dropdown menu and enter the year of your award. EX: "Spring 2012"

Enter your mentor's information here. This is the same as what you have to include on the title page and abstract of your honors thesis.

Select the "Restricted Access Thesis" option.
**Degree Name**

*Leave this field alone*

**Department**

*Optional* - choose your department from the list

**Keywords**

Enter your keywords here. Keywords make your honors thesis more "findable."

**IRB Approval Number (if applicable)**

*Ignore these fields if you did not apply for approval from these boards.*

**IACUC Approval Number (if applicable)**

**Presentation**

*Optional* - include a link to your presentation if you have it
If your honors thesis is largely contained in a different format (such as an image, audio file, video, etc.), upload it as an additional file. Upload your title page/abstract document under the “Upload Full Text” option.

If you have supplementary materials for your honors thesis document, upload them as additional files.

*If you included images in your honors thesis, you may want to consider uploading the original files of the images as additional files, especially if you had to edit them for inclusion in your honors thesis document. This way, those who are interested in seeing the original, full-scale image will have access to it.*

The EKU Honors Thesis Handbook has more information on recommended file types and how to format images for uploading to the Encompass Digital Archive.

![Image of the upload process]

Upload your honors thesis (or title page/abstract if honors thesis is a different format)

Check this if your honors thesis project is a different format (ex: image, audio file, video, etc.), or you have supplementary materials to upload

Click "Submit"
When you click “Submit,” you will see this confirmation page:

You will also receive a confirmation email informing you whether your honors thesis has been successfully uploaded.

You will receive additional emails as your honors thesis goes through the review process and is posted to the Encompass Digital Archive. This process will take several weeks from start to finish. The final email should include a link to your posted honors thesis.
Honors Thesis Mentor Workflow  
(for Honors Thesis Mentors only)

Creating an Encompass Digital Archive Account

Before you can start the honors thesis review process, you will need to create an Encompass account. If you have a SelectedWorks page, you already have an Encompass account and can use this to login.

You can create your Encompass login now, or wait until you receive the email requesting your review of your honors student’s thesis. When you click the link within the email, you will be prompted to create an account.

Go to Encompass Digital Archive (http://encompass.eku.edu).

Click on “My Account” in the upper right hand corner.

Click the “Sign Up” button.
Fill out the required fields (marked with an asterisk *):

- Email address (use your EKU email)
- Name
- Password

You will get an email requesting you to confirm your account. Once you do so, you are all set.
The Honors Thesis Review

You will get an email inviting you to review the honors thesis assigned to you. The email will contain a link directing you to a webpage where you can confirm your commitment. If you have not already created an Encompass account, you will be prompted to do so when you click this link.

When you click “I will review it,” you will be taken to a webpage containing a PDF of the honors thesis to download and a link to submit your review. You do not have to submit your review at this time. You do need to submit a completed grade sheet by noon on the Friday before grades are due.

You will receive an email containing information about composing your review. This email will contain a link you can use to submit your review when you are ready. While there is an option
to add a letter that will only be seen by the director, you need ONLY attach the actual grade sheet to the review site.

Submit your review as a Word document (Option 1). Your student will be able to see your review.

If you have anything confidential that you need to share with the director, use the Cover Letter section at the bottom of this webpage. The student will not be able to see this. The Cover Letter is NOT required to complete your review/grading of the honors thesis.
When you have uploaded your report, click “Submit report” at the bottom. The system will notify the director that your review has been submitted. S/he will be able to retrieve the grade sheet him/herself and will then post the honors thesis in Encompass Digital Archive.