Guidelines for Honors Thesis Writers
Department of Classical Studies, University of Michigan

Researching and writing your thesis will probably be the most challenging undertaking of your undergraduate career. The thesis should be about 50 pages long, excluding the bibliography, illustrations, tables, etc. We encourage you to think creatively about the approach to your research and thesis project. Although the most important factor is your own hard work, following these guidelines closely will make the process easier and more rewarding, and improve the quality of your thesis.

I. TIMELINE

The work of the thesis proceeds according to the timeline below (*formatting guidelines* are given in Part II).

Winter Term of Junior Year

1. Meet with your Major Advisor and the Classical Studies Honors Advisor early in the term to indicate your intention to write an honors thesis. By the time of this meeting, you should have developed concrete ideas about the topic you would like to pursue. The Advisors will then decide, in consultation with relevant faculty, whether you are qualified to write a thesis. Factors that go into this decision include:

    a. Your progress toward completing the extra requirements for honors in your major.

    b. Your major GPA. In Classical Studies, you must have a minimum 3.5 average in your major by the time you graduate to receive honors (higher than the LSA minimum of 3.4 overall). Even if you finish and successfully defend your thesis, without this minimum GPA you cannot receive honors.

    c. The viability of your topic.

2. Find a suitable thesis advisor from among the faculty. Your Major Advisor and the Classical Studies Honors Advisor will offer suggestions if necessary. Note that a potential Thesis Advisor may ask for a writing sample (e.g., a paper for a course) if he or she is unfamiliar with your work.

3. Meet with your Thesis Advisor a few times to work on refining your research question and the scope of your thesis, gathering bibliography, and setting a timeline for the early stages of research, including work to be done by the end of summer.

4. Enroll in the one-credit section of CLCIV 480 "Studying Antiquity" for Fall. It will cover key topics pertaining to research and writing, provide a collegial space in which you and your fellow researchers can exchange ideas and offer support to each other through the writing process, and help you meet the third and seventh week deadlines for your prospectus and bibliography. This course is required and meets together with upper-level students who also take a two-credit section of CLCIV 480 that you are not required to take. The Instructor will determine your grade for this course.

    a. If you participate in the Summer Fellows Program in LSA Honors, you do not need to take this one-credit course, unless your Thesis Advisor asks you to do so.

5. Enroll in CLARCH/CLCIV/LATIN/GREEK/MODGREEK 495 Senior Honors Research for Fall (for up to 2 credits) if you want credit for your thesis research. This course is optional and requires an override from your Thesis Advisor. Your Thesis Advisor will determine your grade for this course.

6. Attend the Classical Studies Undergraduate Research Symposium, scheduled for the day before Spring Commencement, if you are in town. Next year, you will be one of the presenters!

Fall Term of Senior Year

1. By Friday of the third week of classes, submit a draft three-page prospectus of your thesis to your Thesis Advisor. Your Thesis Advisor will respond with written feedback not later than Monday of the fifth week of classes

2. By Monday of the seventh week of term, submit a polished version of your prospectus and a bibliography to the Honors Advisor. The Honors Advisor and your Thesis Advisor will jointly determine if you should continue with the thesis in Winter. If they determine that you should not continue or if you do not meet the seventh week deadline, the Honors Advisor and Thesis Advisor will meet together with you to determine how to proceed. They will agree in writing on what basis your work for CLCIV 480 "Studying Antiquity" will be evaluated (e.g., instead of a full blown thesis, you might complete a substantial research paper).

    a. If you begin the thesis process after the third week deadline, you must complete the requirements given in items 1 and 2 above by the seventh week deadline.

3. Meet with your Thesis Advisor regularly throughout the term. At each meeting you and your Thesis Advisor should agree on tasks and goals to reach for the next meeting. Share drafts of your work with your Thesis Advisor as often as possible and actively seek your Thesis Advisor's guidance. Note that the writing process requires substantial revisions. The more you share your writing with your Thesis Advisor, the more effective his / her feedback will be for you. Also, you are more likely to enjoy the writing process in all of its stages and produce a good thesis. Seek your Thesis Advisor's help promptly should you experience difficulties at any stage of the process. Also, make use of the resources at the Sweetland Writing Center.

4. Draft and revise a chapter (or a substantial section) of the thesis to complete the requirements of CLCIV 480. This chapter may serve as your writing sample if you plan to apply to graduate school. Make sure it is polished!

5. Enroll in CLARCH/CLCIV/LATIN/GREEK/MODGREEK 495 Senior Honors Research for Winter (for up to 3 credits) if you want credit for your thesis research. This course is optional and requires an override from your Thesis Advisor. Your Thesis Advisor will determine your grade for this course.

Winter Term of Senior Year

1. At the start of Winter, the Honors Advisor will consult with you and your advisor, and then the Undergraduate Affairs Committee, to assign you a Second Reader, taking into consideration faculty members' knowledge of your topic. At the time of the assignment, the Second Reader will receive your prospectus.

2. Continue to meet regularly with your Thesis Advisor. It is also a good idea (but is not required) to meet once or twice with the Second Reader to obtain feedback on parts of the project that you have shared with him / her.

3. By 5:00 pm on March 31, submit electronically a completed final draft of the thesis to the Honors Advisor, who will then distribute the thesis to your Thesis Advisor and Second Reader. Be prepared to submit hard copies of your thesis to your Thesis Advisor and Second Reader upon request. If March 31 falls on a weekend, the thesis should be submitted by 5:00 pm on the first Monday following this date.

4. If your Thesis Advisor and the Second Reader determine that the written thesis is satisfactory, an oral exam will be scheduled in April. The oral exam is usually 30 minutes long and is conducted by your Thesis Advisor in the presence of the Second Reader. It is usually conducted as a conversation. You will be given an opportunity to describe your work briefly and then you will be asked a series of

questions. These questions may include substantive queries about your argument and its evidence, requests for clarification, or your thoughts on future directions for research on your topic. Make the most of this unique opportunity to discuss your work with your professors! The final degree of Honors to be awarded (Honors, High Honors, Highest Honors) is determined by the quality of the thesis project and your performance on the oral exam.

5. You will have some time after the oral exam to make final corrections and additions before submitting the completed thesis in final form. These changes may be prompted by feedback from your readers and/or from your own re-reading of the thesis. In most cases, these changes are minor and should not take long to complete.

6. Present your research and findings at the Classical Studies Undergraduate Research Symposium, scheduled for the day before Spring Commencement. You will be expected to prepare a brief PowerPoint for your presentation and attend a practice session in advance of the Symposium.

7. By April 30, submit two bound copies of the final corrected thesis, one to your Thesis Advisor, the other to the Undergraduate Program Coordinator for the Department files (or the first Monday following if this date falls on a weekend).

Note

1. You may begin a thesis in Winter if the following conditions are met: (a) you will be enrolled in courses during the upcoming Fall, and (b) assessment is done by your Thesis Advisor and the Honors Advisor (as above) at the end of Winter. If you begin your thesis in Winter you may, with the agreement of the Thesis Advisor and the Undergraduate Affairs Committee, complete the thesis during the Spring/Summer.

2. In extraordinary circumstances, the deadlines identified above can be modified if the Undergraduate Affairs Committee approves a detailed written case for such alterations presented by you and your Thesis Advisor jointly.

II. FORMATTING

General

1. The thesis must be typed in twelve-point font, double-spaced, with at least one-inch margins on all sides of the page.

2. Number your thesis pages at the top center or top right hand corner of each page using Arabic numbers. The front matter before the Contents page should be unnumbered pages. The front matter after the Contents page should be numbered in small-case Roman numerals.

Parts of the Thesis

1. Title Page: Each element of this page should be at least double-spaced and given in the following sequence:

   The title of your thesis comes first, centered, set in regular upper and lower case. The subtitle (if applicable) goes on a line below the main title.

   The word "by" goes next, below the title, lower-case, on a line by itself.

   Your name follows on a line by itself.

   At least four spaces below your name, write the following text: "A thesis presented for the B.A. degree/ with Honors in/ The Department of Classical Studies/ University of Michigan/ Spring _____ [current year]." (Line breaks are denoted by "/"; omit quotation marks from this text on your own title pages.)

   If you are also submitting the same thesis to another department or to a program, register that on the title page (e.g., "The Department of Classical Studies and the Program in Women's Studies"; "The Departments of Classical Studies and History").

2. Copyright Page: Make sure that you have a copyright page following your title page. The copyright page need only have the "copyright" symbol, followed by the date and your full name at the bottom of that page.

3. Dedication Page (optional): No heading on this page: just place your double-spaced text a suitable distance from the top of the page. Keep this simple.

4. Acknowledgments Page(s): Head this "Acknowledgments." List here in paragraph form all those who have helped you write your thesis.

5. Abstract: Head this "Abstract". This is one of the most important single pages of your thesis. Here you should give your reader a one-page summary of your thesis. You should state the topic of your thesis as clearly as possible, give an overview of the main argument, and summarize your conclusions.

6. Contents Page: Head this with the word CONTENTS in full capital letters. Put section titles flush left; put page numbers flush right. In addition to sections, the contents page should include the Front Matter (pages in lower case Roman numerals), List of Figures (if applicable, in lower-case Roman numerals) Chapters or Sections (in Arabic numerals), Endnotes (if applicable) and Bibliography (or Works Cited).

7. List of Figures Page (if applicable): Head this page "Figures" and continue numbering in lower-case Roman numerals.

8. Thesis Text: Your text should conform to academic style as described in the *MLA Style Manual* or *The Chicago Manual of Style*. Matters of punctuation, citation, quotation and spelling should all conform to academic conventions in the Humanities and be consistent. If you are preparing a thesis for submission in more than one department, and if there are differences in style across the two disciplines in which you are working, you will need to choose the style of one discipline and stick to it. Consistency is what matters most.

9. Translation of Greek and Latin: consult with your advisor about what his or her expectations are. Also, it's important to be consistent in your translation practices, as with your citation style.

10. Figures (if applicable): Put these as close as possible to the point you discuss them in your text. Make sure each figure has a caption that clearly and fully identifies that figure. Each page should be numbered as though it were an ordinary page of the thesis text.

11. Footnotes or Endnotes: The form of annotation should be determined by the standard of your field (consult your thesis advisor on this point). If you have footnotes, print them single-spaced at the bottom of the appropriate pages. You may separate them from the body of your text by a white space or a single line. If you have endnotes, start them on a separate page, headed "Notes." Double-space and number these pages (the numbers should be continuous with the thesis text itself).

12. Bibliography or Works Consulted: Double space and number these pages (the numbers should be continuous with the thesis text itself). There are several acceptable styles for bibliographies in the Humanities. (Refer to the *MLA Style Manual* or *The Chicago Manual of Style*.) Make sure that you are consistent in whatever one you choose.

Policy on Academic Integrity

Anytime you make use of someone else's words or ideas – from a book, article, professor, classmate, or AI, either in summary or quotation or to disagree – you must cite the source properly (see above). Otherwise it is plagiarism.

Plagiarism will be taken extremely seriously. Please read carefully the information about plagiarism provided at the two sites below, and do not hesitate to ask your thesis advisor for clarification:

https://guides.lib.umich.edu/c.php?g=1039501&p=7538393

https://lsa.umich.edu/lsa/academics/academic-integrity.html

If you are suspected of academic dishonesty or misconduct, we will confer with the Office of Student Academic Affairs (SAA) about whether it is an egregious violation and whether it will be handled within the Department or be turned over to SAA. These two different processes are described here: https://lsa.umich.edu/lsa/academics/academic-integrity/procedures-for-resolving-violations-of-academic-integrity.html. The outcome will determine whether you will be allowed to complete your thesis or get credit for any thesis-writing course you are taking.

Using Gen AI

For the purpose of the Honors thesis, students are not allowed to use GPT, ChatGPT, Grammarly or similar programs that rely on Large Language Models (LLMs). The use of other AI programs should only be done in consultation with your thesis advisor beforehand. We believe your own ideas and writing are essential for writing a thesis: we want you to learn how to identify relevant primary and secondary sources, engage critically with the material, and develop an original argument about the evidence. AI cannot do this learning for you.

If a student is found to have used either an LLM or another form of Gen AI without prior approval from the thesis advisor and appropriate documentation, it will be treated as a violation of the principles of Academic Integrity in accordance with the guidelines set out above.

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