

Senior Thesis Guidelines – Humanities Program

The Senior Capstone Experience in Humanities is an opportunity for Humanities majors to bring their interpretive abilities, their writing skills, and their understanding of cultural traditions to bear on a long-term, independent project in the form of a thesis that will serve as the culmination of their humanities studies at the University of New Hampshire. The Senior Thesis for Humanities majors exemplifies each student's accumulated knowledge and mastery of analysis. All seniors majoring in Humanities must write a thesis over the course of their final year of study.

It is vital that the student wishing to begin a thesis demonstrate sufficient preparation through coursework, have a good working knowledge of the topic proposed, and show evidence of strong research and writing skills. All Humanities majors are therefore required to have completed HUMA 500 (Critical Methods in the Humanities) before beginning the first semester of their thesis work. Ideally, Humanities majors take HUMA 500 in their sophomore year.

A student electing to write a thesis must show initiative by conducting preliminary research to develop an appropriate topic. The completed thesis should demonstrate the student's ability to interpret texts and support the interpretation with secondary critical sources. The student should draw on at least two humanities disciplines for the thesis, which means that at least two professors from those disciplines must approve the thesis project and be willing to serve as advisors to the thesis (in addition to the Humanities thesis liaison, who is always a member of Humanities thesis committees).

During the period in which the proposal is formulated, a student should work in close contact with members of the Humanities faculty, starting with the Humanities Program thesis liaison. The Humanities Program advises each student to begin consulting with humanities faculty during the junior year.

- A student should meet with the Humanities Program thesis liaison during the junior year to begin the process of choosing a thesis topic.
- Also during the junior year, a student should contact two faculty members who represent the fields in which the student proposes to work to ask if those faculty members would be willing to serve as his or her thesis advisor.
- After the student and advisors have agreed on a topic and approach, the student must complete a written proposal, during the first semester of the senior year (as part of HUMA 798, the first semester of thesis work).
- Once completed, and approved by the individual faculty members who have agreed to direct the thesis, the final draft of the proposal must be sent electronically to Humanities Program coordinator and the other two thesis committee members.

Guidelines for Thesis Proposals

The proposal should be approximately 5 pages long (though it may be longer). It should be narrative and free of spelling errors and grammatical mistakes. The more specific the proposal (including the argument) is, the more likely it is to be approved without problems.

The thesis proposal must detail the project carefully. It must include a description of the scope and range of the projected thesis, an explanation of the problem or problems to be investigated, and a description of what strategies will be used in the investigation. The proposal must also include a clearly articulated thesis statement and well-documented bibliography.

It must include the following specific elements:

1. A description of the proposed project (what the argument will be).
2. A description of what has already been done. (This should include a list of relevant coursework and other preparation. It should also indicate if the thesis is an expansion of a paper from a class.)
3. A description of critical or theoretical problems the thesis will investigate and the questions to be explored.
4. A prose outline with brief details about what each chapter will cover. For example, an introduction to the problem, section descriptions, and a conclusion would be appropriate.
5. A working annotated bibliography, including books and articles likely to be used, that shows familiarity with the field of study.

Guidelines for Thesis Completion

Following notification of approval during the fall of the senior year, students should continue researching their topic by surveying the critical literature related to the chosen subject. Students are expected to work throughout the fall semester and winter break in order to meet the various thesis deadlines.

The thesis itself should be at least 35 pages. Theses are to be turned in electronically and in hard-copy to all three committee members, after which time a formal defense will be scheduled. At the defense, the student should briefly present his or her work, discussing both the process of writing the thesis and the thesis content. Once the thesis passes and is awarded a grade, the student should submit a final, revised copy – both electronic and hard-copy – to the Humanities Program coordinator.