HONORS CAPSTONE HANDBOOK
Complete with Links to Necessary Forms and Formatting Style Guide

Revised September 2020

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1. PURPOSE AND GOALS: WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT TO GAIN FROM THE CAPSTONE

The Honors College Capstone is the culmination of your Honors College academic experience. Your Honors classes have stressed student-generated work and scholarly independence. The Capstone project is the extension of this training. Now you get the chance to join the company of the scholars, designers, experimentalists, or artists with whom you have been working. You will produce something new and original in your chosen field of study. The capstone topic DOES NOT have to be in your major. As long as you have a project director to guide you, you can work in any area of study that interests you. The purpose of this project is to build the skills of independent thought and research, to prepare you for graduate or professional studies, and to demonstrate your own excellence.

You can expect this work to be difficult but rewarding. You will work closely with your Project Director, and possibly with other students if your project has a group component. Your project should be something you are proud of. It becomes a public document, published through the University Library and permanently archived electronically for all to see. (Link to Honors Capstone Repository)

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2. THESIS OR PROJECT? WHICH IS RIGHT FOR ME?

A **thesis** consists of extensive research process that results in a lengthy, well written, and thoroughly researched paper. You can think of it either as an extended term paper, or as a small version of a Master's Thesis. You can write a thesis in any field, from philosophy to biology to nursing practice to thermodynamics to music theory and so on.

A **project** consists of more "hands-on" activities, even though these hands-on activities typically grow from an extensive knowledge base and require a great deal of theoretical background. Examples of projects include: a new computer program; the design of a new piece of equipment or technology; devising, implementing, and evaluating a new clinical or educational practice; a collection of short stories, poetry, or other literary creation; an art installation, musical composition, or direction of a theatrical production; devising a business plan or creating a marketing and advertising campaign. The project still involves a written component, usually much shorter than the writing involved in the thesis. Typically, your manuscripts will include most or all of the following:

- An explanation of your project's importance and originality
- A summary of the process of completing your project
- A self-assessment of your performance or project

Also, if any kind of performance or web-based creation (such as a video game) is involved in your project, a link to a hosted website/video/audio should be included with your manuscript. Screenshots can also be utilized in the manuscript. Capstones are submitted and kept electronically, so we cannot accept hard copies of CDs, etc. Any artwork should be preserved photographically and electronically included in the capstone manuscript.

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3. USING SENIOR DESIGN/MAJOR CAPSTONE (Individual or Group Projects)

If you wish to use your major's Senior Design/Capstone/Portfolio as the basis of your Honors Capstone, it is possible to do so with advanced arrangements. Both group projects and individual projects are permissible. If you complete your senior design/capstone with other students, your portion of the project must be large enough to justify awarding 3 hours of Honors credit. If the other students are also Honors students, the overall project must be big enough to justify 3 credits for each student. In any case, be sure to discuss this requirement with the Honors Dean or the Director of Undergraduate Research well in advance of taking the senior design/capstone class. Please note that the class MUST be 300-400 level and for 3 credit hours.

It will be the determination of the Project Director if an individual Honors student doing a group project with non-Honors Capstone students can support a single student or multiple Honors students can each earn 3 credits when more than one Honors student in in the group. Therefore, if you are considering this option, please begin the discussion earlier, as it may take a bit more time to work out the details.

If a group project is approved by your Project Director, EACH HONORS STUDENT in the group MUST submit a Capstone Proposal Form (title and abstract/description should be the same) for individual tracking purposes. Likewise, when the capstone is completed, EACH HONORS STUDENT in the group MUST submit the completed capstone manuscript individually for the same reason. Non-Honors students do not need to submit anything, but they should be recognized on the Author's page.

If you are an MAE major and want to use your Senior Design Project, you may also want to explore HON 401. (See Section 5)

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4. WHERE DO I START? A BASIC OUTLINE OF THE PROCESS AND THE FORMS YOU NEED

The Honors Capstone can seem overwhelming at first, but even a thousand-mile journey is undertaken a step at time. Here is a brief outline of how to think about the process. If you want to know *when* to do these things, see When Do I Start?

1. **Decide what you want to do**: project or thesis? What *specific* field will your project or thesis cover? (For example, *computer science* is not a specific field. *Real-time programming* is better. A real-time program that does *X* is best. Similarly: *History* is not a specific field. Roman History is better. The Early Reign of Augustus is best.) **Be sure to pick a topic or project that genuinely interests you and about which you are passionate.** Having a real interest in your project makes it a pleasure to complete, rather than a chore.
2. **Find a Project Director.** Do some research about what areas of research faculty are working in, think back on which faculty and which fields have inspired you, and with whom you did work that most closely resembles what you wish to do. Ask that person if they would be willing to direct your Honors Capstone.
3. **Decide the course you will use.** Many students do their capstone through a course which is part of their program of study. In this case, it is important to meet with the instructor prior to the course start and discuss the possibility of using the course as the basis of the capstone. In this case, the course must be a 300 or 400 level class of at least 3 credits. If this works for you, be sure to enroll for the course AND to fill out an Honors Capstone Proposal form (see below). Upon completion of the course, you will be awarded Honors Credit for that course. If no course presents itself for your capstone, you can sign up for HON 499 (Honors Capstone). This is a placeholder class which does not have a regular meeting time, etc. It is graded S/U, and will not affect your GPA. If you need to use HON 499, **be sure to contact the Honors College Advisor to establish a section of this course for you.** The capstone does NOT need to be completed in the semester in which you take the Capstone Course. The final due date of the capstone is the last day of regular classes (study day) in the semester in which you graduate.
4. **Fill out the forms:** fill out an Honors Capstone Proposal Form (found online on the Honors website). Please initiate this form as soon as you know the details, so that the required approvals can be obtained. The electronic form should be filed no later than the 10th day of the semester in which the class is taken.
5. **Do the work.** Plan to spend at least a semester doing this work. Frequently, you may use work you have already begun and adapt it into a capstone. Often, the work may take more than one semester. Best planning would allow one semester for planning and set up, one semester to do the research/project and one semester to write up and submit the thesis.
6. **Format your capstone.** Whether you choose a thesis or a project, your manuscript must include the Capstone Title Page which you will sign, and then gather the signatures of the Project Director, and the PD's Department Chair (electronically). You must also include a signed and dated copyright page which immediately follows the cover page (these

documents can be downloaded from the "Honors Advising, Tutoring, and Forms" webpage (https://www.uah.edu/honors/current-students/advising). A style and formatting guide is included at the end of this handbook for guidance. You can also adopt the style which is commonly used and accepted in the field of study of your capstone project. Please consult your Project Director for the most appropriate style.

7. **Submit your capstone.** You must submit your Capstone as a single PDF.   If you need, you can have the manuscript scanned at the Salmon Library. In either case, you must upload the PDF via the Completed Capstone Submission Portal. The PDF document should be named use the following naming convention: LAST NAME_FIRST NAME_SEMESTER/YEAR of submission (ex: SP20 or FA21)_HONORS CAPSTONE MANUSCRIPT (Ex: SMITH_MARY_SP21_HONORS CAPSTONE MANUSCRIPT). You should submit your capstone manuscript by the last day of regular classes (study day) for the semester in which you will graduate.

   Requesting deadline extensions for graduating students: For an extension of one day to two weeks, you must e-mail the Undergraduate Research Director to request an extension by the day of the original deadline. We cannot allow extensions of more than two weeks due to the Registrar's deadline for confirming completion and adding "Honors Diploma/Certificate" to your official transcript.

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5. Using Senior Design for your Capstone in Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering

If you plan to use the MAE Engineering Senior Design for your capstone, Honors offers a course – HON 401 – to make this process easier and more rewarding. Each 1-hour section of HON 401 pairs with a section of Senior Design. When you take MAE 491 (the second term of your design course) you take its corresponding HON 401 supplement. (Just remember this simple rule: **491 goes with 401**!) The HON 401 supplement makes it easier for you and the instructor to work together. You take the supplement for only **one** semester, and you earn **4 hours** of Honors Credit.

Here's how it works:

- Select your senior design course.
- In the **first** semester (during MAE 490), you meet with the instructor and develop a project proposal, create timelines for completion, and decide upon deliverables. Your instructor should contact you to start this process, although you should feel free to approach your instructor as well.
- You must submit a final, instructor-approved project proposal by the deadline in order to proceed with completing your Honors Project (typically, by the 8th week of MAE 490).
- The approved proposal should be submitted via the Capstone Proposal Form and EACH member of the group should submit the identical, approved proposal individually for tracking purposes
- In the **second** semester of Design (during MAE 491), you sign up for the **matching** HON 401 in of your design sequence. Course subtitles and sections numbers for HON 401 match the sections of MAE 491. For example, MAE 491 **03**: Rocket Design pairs with HON 401 **H3**: Eng. Capstone Rocket Design, etc. While taking HON 401 and MAE 491, you will complete your project and meet regularly with your instructor.
- Please note that Dr. Carmen teaches in 490 spring, summer, and fall, and 491 in spring and fall, and Dr. Benfield teaches 491 in the fall. All other instructors teach 491 in the spring. If you're not sure what to sign up for – please contact Nicole Hughes at nicole.hughes@uah.edu.
- Upon completion of the senior design course, the supplement, and successful submission of the Capstone project, you will earn **4 hours** of Honors Credit (3 hours for MAE 491, plus one hour for HON 401).
- The final project should be submitted via the Completed Capstone Submission Portal, and EACH student should submit the identical, final manuscript individually for tracking purposes.

Example List of Project Classes (may differ from current offerings):

Instructor	Course	Sign up for HON 401
Carmen	MAE 491-01 Product Realization (every semester)	HON 401-H1 (the semester in which you take MAE 491)
Turner	MAE 491-02 Mission Design	HON 401-H2 (Spring)

	(Spring)	
Lineberry	MAE 491-03 Rocket Design (Spring)	HON 401-H3 (Spring)
Landrum	MAE 491-04 Aircraft Design (Spring)	HON 401-H4 (Spring)
Fikes	MAE 491-05 Moonbuggy (Spring)	HON 401-H5 (Spring)
Benfield	MAE 491-02 Mission Design (Fall)	HON 401- H2 (Fall)

If you are already completing your Capstone through independent work with a faculty member, you **do not** need to take the HON 401 supplement, but you will still need to take Senior Design as part of your engineering degree program.

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6. WHEN DO I START? CAPSTONE TIMETABLE

There are several options for when you can complete your Capstone.

Summer 2 / Summer 3.
This option is particularly useful for students who plan to do their research away from UAH or have particularly demanding course schedules through the regular academic year.

Students who take this option can begin their research or other work during the summer before their junior year, and finish during the summer before their senior year. Capstone submission can be done during the first term of their senior year, and students are eligible to serve as thesis mentors.

Summer 2 / Summer 3 timetable:

Second Semester, Sophomore Year	Identify area of research or project activity; identify where you will do the work and whom you will use as your Project Director. If the Project Director is not UAH Faculty, check with the Honors Dean regarding qualifications. Secure any necessary permissions and funding (such as an Honors Capstone Research Summer Project or RCEU). Decide whether your research can be carried out under a current UAH course of if you need to enroll in HON 499, and inform the College Coordinator of your plans. Submit the online Honors Capstone Proposal Form.
Summer before Junior Year	Carry out initial stages of project/research
Second Semester, Junior Year	Re-establish supervision the project activity or research. Discuss with the Honors Dean, secure any necessary permissions and funding.
Summer before Senior Year	Carry out final stages of project/research and submit Fall of Senior Year

Third Year Capstone / Fourth Year Mentor
This option offers students several advantages. Students can finish their Capstone before their Senior year and (assuming all other requirements are met) they can rest safe in the knowledge that they will earn their Honors Diploma. Also, they are well positioned to mentor other students through their thesis, a rewarding activity for all.

Third Year Timetable:

Second Semester, Sophomore Year	Identify area of research or project activity; identify where you will do the work and whom you will use as your <u>Project Director</u>. If the Project Director is not UAH Faculty, check with the Honors Dean regarding qualifications. Decide whether your research can be carried out under a current UAH course of if you need to enroll in HON 499, and inform the College Coordinator of your plans. Submit the online Honors Capstone Proposal Form.
Junior Year	Carry out the project/thesis research
End of Second Semester, Junior Year	Submit the online capstone project.
First Semester, Senior Year	Inform the Honors College Coordinator if you wish to serve as a Capstone Mentor.

Fourth Year Capstone
This option also offers students several advantages. Students can finish their Capstone as part of a senior capstone project in their major, and they frequently have amassed enough knowledge and background to be ready for the demands of the Capstone.

Fourth Year Timetable:

Second Semester, Junior Year	Identify area of research or project activity; identify where you will do the work and whom you will use as your <u>Project Director.</u> If the Project Director is not UAH Faculty, check with the Honors Dean regarding qualifications. Decide whether your research can be carried out under a current UAH course of if you need to enroll in HON 499, and inform the College Coordinator of your plans. Submit the online Honors Capstone Proposal Form.
Senior Year	Carry out the project/thesis research
End Senior Year	Submit the capstone project

7. THE PROJECT DIRECTOR: CHOOSING WISELY

Whether you write a thesis or do a project, you must have somebody with whom you can work closely and who is an expert in your chosen field. You may wish to work with a professor with whom you previously took a class, your major advisor, or someone with whom you have been working in a lab, studio, or in clinical practice.

We strongly encourage you to pick a thesis director who is UAH Faculty member. If you wish to work with somebody not affiliated with UAH, please check on his or her qualifications with the Honors Dean. Generally, the director should have at least a graduate degree in her or his field, and preferably the terminal degree in the relevant field.

The Project Director provides guidance in research or in the activity of the project. The Director should meet with you regularly and should be accessible throughout the course of your project. You are expected to remain in close contact with your Project Director. Work should be submitted for review on a regular basis, and you should expect corrections or suggestions to be returned in a timely manner. You must allow a reasonable amount of time for the Project Director to review your work – don't pile work on him or her at the end of the semester.

Therefore, as discussed, the Project Director has 4 main duties:
1. To help you frame your capstone topic (title and abstract/description for the proposal form)
2. Determine what work is to be done (beyond the expectations of a non-Honors student), and what can practically be accomplished in the time frame considered
3. Meet with you regularly to check on progress, review draft manuscripts, and to give guidance and advise
4. Sign off on the final manuscript as being correct and complete

8. HON 499 OR REGULAR CLASS? WHICH IS BEST FOR ME AND HOW IS CREDIT AWARDED?

Whether you sign up for HON 499 or use a regular class (typically one in your major) for your Capstone is up to you. Bear in mind that if you use a course in your major in which you are already expected to complete a project (like a senior design course), you **must have additional work, research, or activity to make it count for Honors Credit and to count as an Honors Capstone**. You can work out this extra work with your Project Director and may consult the Honors Dean as necessary. The credit for this course will count as Honors Credit, although at least and no more than 3 hours may be used.

HON 499 is taken as a pass/fail course and it technically does not meet. In other words, there is no scheduled meeting time, but you do meet with your director. The course work and content is the work of your Honors Capstone. You will receive a passing grade at the end of the

semester in which you sign up for this course provided satisfactory progress has been made toward your thesis or project. As such, the "grade" does NOT affect your GPA.

If you are not graduating in the semester that you are taking the capstone course, and you do not complete it, you DO NOT have to sign up for the course again. In this case, you have until the last day of regular classes in the semester that you graduate to complete the capstone.

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9. HUMAN/ANIMAL SUBJECTS: KNOW YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

It is your responsibility to ensure your research complies with UAH and policies and guidelines. If you are using animals in your thesis/project, you must get approval from IACUC, Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee. Likewise, if you are using human subjects or giving out surveys, you must get approval from the University Institutional Review Board, IRB, or be listed on an approved protocol. Your Project Director should be able to help you with this process. If not, please contact the Honors College Office for guidance.

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10. LENGTH OF THE RESEARCH PAPER

Details such as page length are at the discretion of your Project Director. It is also difficult to establish overall guidelines, given the different requirements and standards of the widely differing disciplines on offer at UAH. As a general rule, 20-30 pages (including front matter, notes and bibliography) is a minimum for students in the humanities, arts, and social sciences. 40-50 pages is a more appropriate length for works in some of these disciplines. If you are writing in math, natural science, engineering or pre-professional disciplines, you may have theses consisting of only 20 pages.

If you choose a project rather than thesis, you still must submit an accompanying paper as part of your senior project. Depending on the work involved in completing the project itself, it is likely the written component will be quite a bit shorter than a traditional research thesis. See the Project or Thesis section for details about what should go into your capstone manuscript. [Return to Contents]

11. FORMATTING THE THESIS OR PROJECT PAPER: HOW DO I PUT THE FINAL PRODUCT TOGETHER?

The standard format for an Honors thesis or project paper is listed below. While not every thesis paper will include the same sections and items, the following can be used as a general guideline.

 Although there is a formatting guide at the end of this Handbook, you should follow the

dictates of your Project Director regarding formatting. English papers should be formatted like English papers, Psychology papers like psychology papers. The exception to this is the front matter and the title page, which must be uniform for all Honors Capstone Theses and Write-ups. **The Title Page (and its specific formatting), Copyright Page, Table of Contents, and Thesis Abstract are required for ALL theses and write-ups regardless of discipline or project type.** Submissions that fail to contain those three elements will not be accepted by the Honors College. Additionally, one final copy must be printed on regular copy paper with the appropriate margins and page numbers. It is **your** responsibility to ensure that the final copy meets all formatting requirements. Learning proper formatting the thesis or project paper is an important part of this process. In general, all theses and project write-ups should have the following:

   a. Title Page (REQUIRED) – The specific format for this is found in the style guide below and on the Honors webpage here.
   b. Copyright Page (REQUIRED) – Signed and dated (form in the style guide below and on the Honors webpage here.
   c. Table of Contents (REQUIRED)
   d. Dedication (if desired)
   e. Abstract (REQUIRED): 1 page appearing after the Table of Contents summarizing the work of the Thesis or Project. Must be included in the Table of Contents
   f. Introduction
   g. Main Body
   h. Conclusion
   i. Endnotes, Works Cited or References (required if sources are quoted)
   j. Tables, Graphs, Photos, Maps, etc. (if appropriate – these may also be included in the main body of the text)
   k. Appendix(ces) (if appropriate)

All pages must be numbered consecutively. The title page should not have a page number, and pagination should begin on the next page.

At the end of this document, you will find the Honors College's Honors Capstone Style Guide. This Style Guide both *shows* the style all Honors Theses/Project write-ups should follow and discusses the elements of this style in the body of its text. It is based on the *Chicago Manual of Style*, which students are encouraged to consult for further information.
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12. SUBMITTING THE THESIS PROPOSAL FORM AND FINAL THESIS: THE FINAL STEPS AND REQUIREMENTS

Procedure to Submit Online Thesis Proposal Form

Honors students must submit an online Thesis Proposal Form NO LATER than the 10th class day of the semester in which they will take the Capstone class. If the student runs into difficulty submitting the complete form by this date, s/he should contact either the Undergraduate Research Director or the Honors Dean.

However, generally speaking, students are strongly encouraged to submit the form at the end of the prior semester, as they will know the instructor of their class after registration for the coming semester, and can settle all the details before the end of the semester.

The online Thesis Proposal Form is a Google Form and does NOT need to be printed out. It is completely paperless. However, the student should discuss the thesis/project details with their project director before filling out the form. The thesis/project description MUST be approved by the project director before submitting the form. The student must have the finalized version BEFORE submitting the form, as they will need to cut-and-paste (not attach) the description of the thesis/project into the online form.

The online form can be found on the UAH Honors website here under "Honors Thesis/Project Proposal Form."

The form must be filled out completely and correctly. Typos made when filling out the form may result in a delay in approving the proposal, so please double check your work. Upon submission, the form will be sent electronically to the Undergraduate Research Director for approval. This approval also allows the Honors College to track the form. The form will either be approved, or rejected with comments on what needs to be modified. If the form is rejected, the student must resubmit a new form with the instructed changes.

After the Director approves the form, it is electronically forwarded to the Project Director (PD). Make sure that you have discussed all details with the PD before submitting the form, so that there are no surprises. When the PD has approved the form, it is forwarded to the Department Chair (DC), and when approved by the DC, the form will be forwarded to the Honors Dean (HD) for final approval. Some proposals may also be reviewed by a Honors Faculty Fellow, when appropriate. When all approvals are complete, all parties will be notified by e-mail. During this process the student has the ability to track the progress of the approvals online.

Procedure to Submit Completed Capstone

The Thesis/Project's FINAL due date is the last day of regular classes in the semester in which the student will graduate (normally the "Study Day"). If the student runs into difficulty submitting the Capstone Project or Thesis by this date, s/he should contact the Undergraduate Research Director to request an extension. Extensions of more than two weeks require a form. It can also be handed in before the graduation semester deadline, and submission in semesters before the graduation semester (3rd year thesis, for example) is encouraged.

After the student has printed out or emailed the manuscript for review of the Project Director and PD's Department Chair, they should sign the Title/Signature Page, and then obtain the signatures of the Project Director and PD's Department Chair. Likewise, the student should sign and date the Copyright Page. Signatures can be done electronically with the fillable PDF version of the two pages found on the "Honors Capstone Forms" page.

When the student has signed the title page and copyright page and collected the approval signatures (actual or electronically) of the project director and chair (the Honors Dean signature is not required at this point), the student must submit the manuscript and signed forms (title page and copyright page) as a single PDF document. If the student does not have the capability to combine the files and/or scan into a single document, they can go to the Salmon Library with a printout of the completed manuscript and signed Title and Copyright pages, and have it scanned into a single PDF file. If you would like to do this, please follow this procedure:

E-mail Ms. Charlotte Olsen at (olsoncc@uah.edu), and set an appointment to meet with her at room #343 of Salmon Library, Monday thru Thursday between 8AM and 4:30PM. At that meeting, bring your complete manuscript (single sided copied) with the completed signature and copyright page. The manuscript will be scanned and e-mailed to you.

You must submit the PDF manuscript to the Completed Capstone Manuscript Submission Portal (here). NO hard copies will be accepted at the Honors College and should not be submitted for any reason. The submission process is fully electronic.

When the Honors Dean has approved the thesis, he will sign the Title page electronically, and the capstone will be considered complete and submitted. The Honors Dean will send an email to confirm your successful completion of the Honors Capstone.

Within one or two semesters following submission, a PDF copy of the completed manuscript will be stored electronically in the Salmon Library Honors Capstone Repository.

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13. WHEN SOMETHING GOES WRONG: WHAT TO DO JUST IN CASE

Unavoidable circumstances may occur in the course of completing your Capstone. For example, you may be forced to change topics or Project Directors, or you or your Project Director may face a life-emergency or crisis. **Do not panic. These things happen.** Do be sure to contact the Honors Dean or Director of Undergraduate Research as soon as possible to begin working on a plan to recover.

Change in topic or Project Director
Sometimes the topic you originally intended to pursue does not work out. In this case, you are advised to discuss the possibility of choosing a different, more viable topic with the Project Director. Sometimes changing topic means changing Project Director. Whether you change the topic, Project Director, or both, a new Honors Capstone Proposal Form must be submitted online.

Emergencies
If your Project Director becomes seriously ill or hurt, leaves town, or experiences some other emergency that hinders your ability to complete your thesis, please contact the Honors Dean or Director of Undergraduate Research immediately. If necessary, the Honors College will help you to locate a new Director. This also requires a new Honors Capstone Proposal Form be resubmitted online to the Honors College Office.

If you experience an emergency that prevents you from completing the thesis on time, be sure to discuss this with your Project Director and either the Honors Dean or Director of Undergraduate Research. Remember, you do not have to complete the project or thesis during the actual time in which you are enrolled in thesis course, but it is strongly encouraged. If you feel you are unable to complete the thesis, a withdrawal may be granted by the Honors College only in a case with extenuating circumstances (e.g., a lengthy illness, death of a family member, etc.). Please contact the Honors Dean if you find yourself faced with these circumstances. We are here to help you.

Requesting an Extension
If you cannot meet the deadline for submitting the capstone manuscript (last day of regular classes in the semester you graduate), you may request an extension. Extension of 2 weeks or less can be made by e-mailing the Director of Undergraduate Research. In the message, please try and estimate when you will be able submit the manuscript. It is the student's responsibility to follow up if they cannot meet the two-week extension.

For an extension of one day to two weeks, you must e-mail the Undergraduate Research Director to request an extension by the day of the original deadline. We cannot allow extensions of more than two weeks due to the Registrar's deadline for confirming completion and adding "Honors Diploma/Certificate" to your official transcript.

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(Honors Capstone Title Page. Use this exact Page, with your information filled in for the areas of red type – type it in black and delete these sentences here. Place this page at the beginning of your thesis or project write-up and get the relevant signatures.)

Honors Capstone Formatting Guide

by

First Middle Last

An Honors Capstone
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Honors Diploma or Certificate
to

The Honors College

of

The University of Alabama in Huntsville

Date

Honors Capstone Director: Title (Dr., Professor) First Last
Project Director's title (e.g., "Associate Professor of X" - check with Director)

_____

Student (signature)   Date

_____

Director (signature)   Date

_____

Department Chair (signature)   Date

_____

Honors College Dean (signature)   Date

Honors College
Frank Franz Hall
+1 (256) 824-6450 (voice)
+1 (256) 824-7339 (fax)
honors@uah.edu

HONORS COLLEGE
THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA IN HUNTSVILLE

Honors Thesis Copyright Permission

This form must be signed by the student and submitted with the final manuscript.
In presenting this thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Honors Diploma or Certificate from The University of Alabama in Huntsville, I agree that the Library of this University shall make it freely available for inspection. I further agree that permission for extensive copying for scholarly purposes may be granted by my advisor or, in his/her absence, by the Chair of the Department, Director of the Program, or the Dean of the Honors College. It is also understood that due recognition shall be given to me and to The University of Alabama in Huntsville in any scholarly use which may be made of any material in this thesis.

_____

Student Name (printed)

_____

Student Signature

_____

Date

Table of Contents (Yes, you should have one!)

(Note – your thesis will **never** have **both** Bibliography **and** Reference List – it will have one or the other!)

Obviously, the table of contents is written last. Microsoft Word has some automated table of contents features. They are exceedingly tricky to use. This one was constructed manually using margins and tab fields.

In publishing parlance, the title page, table of contents, dedication, and abstract are called the "front matter."

Dedication:

This style guide is dedicated to all future Honors College Students, so that they may format in peace and with the knowledge that a well-formatted paper is a happy paper.

Dedications are entirely optional, but they are fairly common for graduate level theses. This work is the culmination of you Honors Undergraduate Career, and it is a graceful gesture to dedicate to somebody (or a group of somebodies) of singular importance to you.

You will note that page-breaks (not section breaks) are used to separate these pages in front matter. Section breaks that include page breaks can also be used, although you should attend to how section breaks do or do not affect your header and footer.

Abstract

Students frequently do not know how to format their Honors Theses or Capstone Project Write-ups. This Style Guide attempts to address that deficiency so that students may produce uniform, clearly formatted Theses. (That's an actual abstract *of* this style guide.)

The basic function of this Style guide is to demonstrate *in its own formatting*, the proper formatting of the Thesis or Write-up and also, in its main body, to discuss the elements of this formatting. Elements that are written in red are guidelines where you will fill in your own information or learn about various formatting features that are difficult to explain in the main body of the text. Most of the guidelines are from *The Chicago Manual of Style.* Because this guide is very general (and used by many publishing houses), the Honors College relies on it over discipline-specific guides, like the APA or MLA guides. *However, you should follow the dictates of your Project Director regarding formatting. English papers should be formatted like English papers, Psychology papers like psychology papers. The exception to this is the front matter and the title page, which must be uniform for all Honors Capstone Theses and Write-ups.*

We can begin this formatting lesson with a discussion of the Abstract. Writing the Abstract is one of the very last things you do, when you have a very good grasp of the overall scope and argument of your Thesis or Project. (But wait you ask – don't I have to write an abstract when I first propose the Capstone? – Yes – more about that below.) Abstracts are exceedingly difficult to write, as they must present in clear language the main theses and lines of argument of the work they abstract. Again, different disciplines have

different standards for what should be included in an abstract and whether or not it should refer directly to the paper (as in "this paper attempts to…"). Consult you Project Director for the best practice in your discipline.

Your abstract should be no more than one page (unlike this one!), and preferably less. It should be paragraphed, if necessary, with 5-point indents and the word "Abstract" centered in bold, as above.

Abstracts for the Capstone Proposal

Bear in mind that the abstract you write for your Capstone Proposal Form (at the end of this document) will be a proposal of your basic thesis, methods, and what you hope to discover. Do not worry if you feel uncertain about some or all of these things. That is normal. Your initial abstract is *not a contract!* What you end up doing and writing may change substantially from your initial proposal. *That is totally normal, and even to be expected.*

Introduction

That bold writing write above this sentence is called a "heading." In your thesis, make sure that your first level headings are bold-faced and centered. Frequently, headings will nest inside each other. This is common if you like to break your text up into sections and sub-sections. In that case, follow these guidelines for different levels of heading: First level heading – Chapter titles:

Centered in bold type

Second level heading – major sections *within* chapters:

Bold type, left justified

Third level heading – minor section breaks *within* major sections *within* chapters: Regular type, left justified.

Be sure to keep track of which level of heading you are working within.

The Purpose and Scope of Your Introduction (Yep – that's a second level heading.)

Now with that out of the way, let's say a word about introductions. In general, the introduction should be a way of drawing your reader into your work. It should not summarize everything you have done or will do in the subsequent paper, nor should it repeat the abstract. Introducing a paper can be very difficult. Students frequently make the mistake of writing the introduction first (it comes first, right?). It is much easier to write the introduction last, after the main body of the paper is composed and you actually know what you are introducing. Different disciplines again may have different approaches to introductions. Check with your Project Director on discipline standards.

Use a page break to separate chapters from each other. Don't just space down with "returns." Using returns can cause problems when printing (and converting to a PDF is a form of printing) and headaches when you revise.

Chapter 1: The Basics (First level heading)

Let's begin by noting the general format: double-spaced, 12-point font with a ½ inch *tab* indentation for paragraphs. (Word will start automatically indenting after paragraphs. Publishers often prefer that you have as few automatic formatting features as possible, so try to stay with tabbing paragraphs manually.) Left-justify your text with a ragged right (like this paragraph); do not fill justify. Keep lines spacing even throughout. Annoyingly, the default on new versions of Word places extra spaces between paragraphs. You may turn this feature off by going to the Layout tab and formatting your paragraph with "0 pt" for spacing both Before and After, rather than "auto." You can then save this as the new default. This is also where you can easily adjust the margins for your whole document: minimum 1-inch margins all around, preferably 1 inch on left and right. Print in black ink and use a fairly standard font, like Times New Roman. Use single spaces after periods and colons.[1]

There is a header for the whole paper, which consists of a shortened version title of the paper (called a "running head") and a page number on the right side. Note that there is

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[1] Also note that footnotes, like this, are in 12-point font, and are also double-spaced. Word and other word-processing programs frequently have a default format that has fewer points (9 or 10-point font is common) and is single-spaced. Be sure to change this as you go. For the thesis, we would prefer that you use footnotes, rather than endnotes, as they are easier to consult while reading and easier to format. **Remember to insert a footnote using the reference or insert feature of Word. In other words – use the automatic footnote feature. Do not attempt to type them manually at the bottom of the page.**

no page number or running head on the cover sheet, but that there is on all subsequent

pages. This can be done in *Word* by selecting "different first page" under the header menu,

or by inserting section breaks between the title page and the first page of the document and

formatting each section differently. If you have difficulty getting the first page of your

document to start with the numeral 1, remember that you can actually start the page

numbering of your title page at 0 so that the actual second page starts numbering at 1.

Always number all pages of your Thesis manuscript.

When using quotations, here is the Chicago guideline: "In general, a short quotation,

especially one that is not a full sentence, is run in. A hundred words or more -- or at least

eight lines -- set off as a block quotation." (Yes – that was just a "run in" quote. In other

words, it was a quote "run into" the main paragraph of the text.) Also, it goes on to say that

> other criteria apply, however: the nature of the material, the number of quotations,
>
> and the appearance of the printed page. A quotation of two or more paragraphs is
>
> best set off...as are quoted letters (if salutations, signatures, and such are included),
>
> lists, and any material that requires special formatting. If many quotations of
>
> varying length occur close together, running them all in may make for easier
>
> reading. But where quotations are being compared or otherwise used as entities in
>
> themselves, it may be better to set them all as block quotations, however short.
>
> Poetry is nearly always set off. (Yes, that's a set off quote.)

Several things should be noticed here, in addition to what the paragraph actually says

(which should be read carefully – it gives more rules for using quotes). Run in quotations

are always in quotes. Set off quotations are not. The set off quotation is indented another ½

inch (do this by changing the actual margins for the quote only) but it still runs in double-space. The block quote begins with lower case because it continues a sentence. If your block quote begins with a sentence, it should obviously begin with a capital letter.

Use ellipses points (…) when you cut words or sentences out of the *middle* of the quote. We will use the simplest method, in which no more than 3 points are to be used, and may follow other forms of punctuation as necessary (e.g., "what could this mean?...you can see from the example"). *You do not need to begin or end quotes with ellipses points*, even if you cut into the middle of a sentence or end the middle of a sentence. To make quotes flow better, you may alter tenses or pronouns, but enclose the alteration in square brackets, as in, "what could this mean?...[she could] see from the example." Citation of these quotes will be covered below, and there are many, many more details and rules about using quotations, enough to merit their own chapter in *Chicago*. If you do not have access to this, just use common sense, good grammar, and consult your Project Director.

Mathematical formulae and characters (Second level heading)

Clarity and consistency are the two most important virtues here. The same symbol should denote the same thing whenever it occurs and should never shift meaning in the text. Mathematical expressions, equations, and the like should be set off and centered, especially if they are to be discussed in the text. For example:

If *a=b,* then for all real numbers *x,*

$$a + x = b + x, \quad ax = bx, \quad -a = -b$$

The text introducing the symbols is set in regular type and left-justified, while the equations are set in italics and centered. Numerals and mathematical symbols (e.g., sin, cos, ∑, etc.) are typically in regular type (not italics). The *Chicago Manual* has many rules about the display of equations, but most of them amount to considerations that anyone familiar with the math would likely know. *Again, follow the conventions of your discipline* above all else.

Computer code, poetry, other special formats (Second level heading)

Like the long quote above states, things that require special formatting, like poetry, mathematical proofs, lines of computer code, etc. should be set off from the main text with their own margins, typically an additional ½ inch indentation.

Illustrations, tables, etc. (Second level heading)

Illustrations, tables, etc. should appear as soon as possible after they are mentioned in the text. With Word and other word processing programs, this is easy to achieve. Try to avoid putting it *before* the mention of it in the text unless it is on the same page as the mention. For clarity, always use a text reference (like "See table 2.3" or "consult figure 4" or "compare illustrations 2 and 5"). This also means that your illustration, table, etc. should be clearly labeled. Label continuously throughout the document: if you end chapter 1 with illustration #4, the first illustration in chapter 2 should be #5. Otherwise, confusion will reign. It is not necessary to include a list of illustrations unless you think it will help the reader to manage his or her way through the work.

Chapter 2: Citations, Bibliographies, and Reference Lists

Now, on to citations. *Chicago* lists multiple formats but we will focus one two: bibliographic and author-date. I will give you some information about both in what follows. Pay close attention to the sample entries, as there are no accidental features in them: spacing, font-type, punctuation are exact. **Please note that your Project Director may wish to use whatever citation format is common practice in her or his discipline. Follow your Director's lead on this, as this will be a very valuable skill to learn.** If you project Director does not have strong opinions on the correct citation format, use one of the two here.

Citation format: Author-date (yes, that's another second-level heading!)

This system remedies puts the citations in the text, leaving the footnotes free for substantive discussions. However, this method is generally used in the sciences, professional journals, and social sciences, and not as typically in the humanities (although that too is slowly changing). If you choose to adopt this formatting guide, you will use this system.

In this system, you use parenthetical, in-text citations that contain the author, the date of publication, and the page number. The basic format thus looks like this: (Detmer 1988, 23). In other words (*author date, #)*. These citations are generally placed *before* punctuation. Here is an example from *Chicago*:

Recent literature has examined long-run price drifts following initial public offerings (Ritter 1991; Loughran and Ritter 1995), stock splits (Ikenberry, Rankine and Stice 1991),

seasoned equity offerings (Loughran and Ritter 1995), and equity repurchase (Ikenberry, Lakonishok, and Vermaelen 1995).

Notice that the citations come before either commas or periods. Include the citation *within* the sentence punctuation, *don't leave it outside.* So, for instance:

Foucault describes the monster as the "natural form of the unnatural" (2003, 56).

Note that the period here does not occur inside the final quotation mark, as it normally would, but rather after the citation.[2] Also, as you can see, if the author's name appears in the main text, you do not need to repeat it in the citation (another example from *Chicago*):

As Edward Tufte points out (2001, 139), "a graphical element may carry data and also perform a design function usually left to non-data-ink."

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[2] By the way, there is much confusion about this point in student papers. The rule is simple: if the sentence ends in a quotation, the period goes **inside** the quotation mark, unless followed by an author-date citation as in the example. Commas also always go inside the quotation mark. Other punctuation marks go outside the marks. Contrast below with the sentence above: What did Foucault mean when he stated (2003, 56) that the monster was the "natural form of the unnatural"?

Once again, if you do not have a copy of *Chicago*, let common sense and clarity be your guide.

The author-date format does not call its list of works cited a "Bibliography," but rather a "Reference List" or a "Works Cited" page. It also begins on its own page, and entries have a hanging indent. The format for documentation is different, since the reader must find it by author and date. The above examples are transcribed for comparison. Note titles are now capitalized *sentence style* (in other words, only the first word and proper nouns are capitalized) and there are no quotation marks around an essay title. The following page begins a reference list with some common examples.

Reference List

Here is a reference list constructed from the examples used elsewhere in this style guide along with some other, newer sources. Note again – hanging indent, alphabetical. Within a single author – it then orders by earliest date of publication. Notice that journal articles have information about where they were located electronically.

Barbaras, Renaud. 2004. *The being of the phenomenon.* Trans. Ted Toadvine and Leonard Lawler. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. Print. A work in Translation.

Barnes, Hazel. 1992. Sartre's ontology: the revealing and making of being. In *The Cambridge companion to Sartre,* ed. Christina Howells, 13-38. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Print. An article in an anthology.

Beauvoir, Simone de. 1976. *The ethics of ambiguity*. Trans. Bernard Frechtman. New York: Carol Publishing Group. Print.

------. 1988. Merleau-Ponty and pseudo-Sartreanism. *International Studies in Philosophy,* 21: 3-48. Print. A work in translation followed by another work by the same author, cited as a journal article. Follow publication order (1976 before 1988!) Again note the dashes.

Compton, John. 1982. Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, and human freedom. *The Journal of Philosophy* 79, No. 10: 577-588. DOI: 10.2307/2026320 Single-author essay in a journal accessed electronically (hence, the DOI).

Detmer, David. 1988. *Freedom as a value.* La Salle, Illinois: Open Court. Print. A regular, non-translated book.

Sood, Mansi and H. Kaur. Preference based news recommender system. *International Journal of Advanced Computer Research*: 4 (2014): 575-581. Print. A multi-author journal article in print.

Zhang, Lun, L. Zheng, T. Peng. Structurally embedded news consumption on mobile news applications. *Information and Processing Systems*: 53 (2017): 1242-1253. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ipm.2017.04.009 A multi-author journal article from an electronic source.

Conclusion

There you are: the basics for formatting your paper. When it comes time to write your dissertation and master's thesis, universities usually require much stricter guidelines, including margin size, avoidance of widows and orphans, and so on. Publishing houses and journals often have their own style requirements, usually based on *Chicago*. For our purposes, it doesn't hurt to go through your paper when it is in its final form and make sure that all the pages are formatted the same, that headings and subheadings (if you use them) are all formatted identically, that you try to eliminate widows (short lines or words that conclude a paragraph but begin as the top-line of a page) and orphans (which occur when the first line of a paragraph is the final line of a page) as much as possible (don't change the entire formatting just to accomplish this, but do make sure that headings and subheadings are neither widowed nor orphaned). Spelling and grammar mistakes must be kept to an absolute minimum; having others proofread your paper is the best way to assure a clean manuscript; reading it aloud to yourself is a good second. If you don't know a grammar

rule, the web or grammar resources in the library can be consulted. The library also has a copy of the *Chicago Manual of Style.*

Although modern word-processing programs allow you to produce material that looks like a book, any journal or publisher will want to format your material in their own way, so get in the habit now of producing good, clean easy to read manuscripts with clear, thorough documentation. That is the exact goal of these formatting guidelines as well. Minimize fanciness and maximize clarity.