

# Senior Thesis Guidelines

## Department of Anthropology

### University of New Hampshire

Amended Spring 2016

The Department of Anthropology at the University of New Hampshire offers the students the option of completing a senior thesis. The senior thesis is not a task to be undertaken lightly. Generally, the thesis option is for those students who in the course of their undergraduate careers have developed a deep and sustained interest in a particular topic of anthropological interest. The student may develop a thesis topic independently or the thesis topic may be linked to the on-going research project of a faculty member. The student undertaking a thesis should possess a level of competence and independence well beyond that required for the completion of established courses. Of special importance is a student's ability to independently conduct library research in order to establish what has previously been written regarding their topic. The student should give careful thought to choosing a thesis advisor based on knowledge of the areas of expertise and interest possessed by members of the faculty in the Department of Anthropology.

**Please note:** A senior thesis entails minimally a semester of research followed by a semester designated to complete the final product, usually a written paper. This means that the student should follow all guidelines established by the department, including any specified deadlines, and must follow the schedule discussed in advance with the faculty member who is serving as the student's thesis advisor. The final grade for the student's senior thesis will reflect not only the quality of the final product, but also the student's consistent performance throughout both semesters during the research and writing process. Students must demonstrate to the thesis advisor consistent effort and regular progress on the research and writing and these criteria will be factored into the student's final grade.

### **Thesis Planning: Steps Undertaken in the Junior Year**

In order to enroll in *ANTH 699 Senior Thesis*, the student must have cumulative GPA of at least 3.0. Given the scope of the thesis project and the scheduling of deadlines associated with its timely completion, thesis planning must begin in the junior year. In the senior year, the student must enroll in *ANTH 699: Senior Thesis*, for a total of eight credits taken over the course of two semesters. (Exceptional cases, such as completion of the thesis in one semester, must be petitioned to the department and approved by the Chair.) Further, the department will count the two semesters as **one course** for the purposes of completing the Anthropology major's requirements.

The first step of thesis planning involves formulating a topic and approaching a tenure-track faculty member to serve as the thesis advisor. An additional faculty member must be chosen to serve as the second reader. Faculty members are chosen on the basis of the degree to which their areas of expertise overlap with the student's research topic. Although non tenure-track faculty

are neither required nor expected to serve as advisors or readers, they may be asked to serve if the arrangement meets the approval of the Chair.

Those students who wish to base their theses on ethnographic research must complete prior to the senior year *ANTH 513 Ethnographic Methods*; those intending to base theses on archaeological fieldwork must complete *ANTH 514 Methods and Theory in Archaeology*.

Before agreeing to serve as either advisors or readers, faculty members carefully assess the student's level of ability and preparation for the thesis project. Typically, during the Spring semester of the junior year, the student submits to a faculty member a proposal for the thesis which includes: 1.) a clearly articulated topic of study and a research methodology; 2.) a tentative bibliography; 3.) a timeline which sets specific dates for the completion of various stages of the project (including completion of research and completion of the first draft); and 4.) a writing sample (e.g., a research paper written for an anthropology course) that allows faculty members to assess the student's ability to responsibly carry out research, analyze data, and write a well-organized, well-written thesis.

Students planning to base a thesis on field research should consider applying for research funds via UNH's Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP), administered by the Hamel Center (<http://www.unh.edu/undergrad-research/>). Deadlines for the various funding competitions are usually in the Fall semester and completion of funded research generally occurs during the summer between junior and senior years. Students must plan ahead!

Additionally, students conducting ethnographic research must gain the approval of UNH's Internal Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects prior to beginning their research. Even those students conducting research under the aegis of another research institution are required to obtain clearance from UNH's IRB. Given the time required for the IRB's review of proposals, it is recommended that students begin the process in the Spring of their junior year. (See <http://www.unh.edu/undergrad-research/> for detailed guidelines for submitting a proposal to the IRB.) These requirements are based on internationally negotiated ethics guidelines and no exceptions will be made. Students conducting ethnographic research must additionally complete an on-line tutorial on the ethical considerations associated with research on human subjects and establish with the thesis advisor that they have the requisite tact, sensitivity and maturity to conduct such research.

It is recommended that students purchase and familiarize themselves with a good style guide that provides detailed guidelines for writing a thesis. Kate Turabian's guide, for example, is one of the best and provides detailed guidelines on the correct form for citations and references for diverse (including online) sources, as well as detailed tips on thesis organization. The reference is as follows:

Turabian, Kate, et.al., *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, Seventh Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007

## **Enrollment and Credits**

The student must file a Senior Thesis Form containing the student's name, topic, number of credits, semester enrolled, and the names of the advisor and second reader. This form is obtained from and submitted to the administrative assistant of the Department (Room 310, Huddleston Hall) before the end of add/drop period—typically, in the Fall semester of one's senior year.

Typically a student enrolls for a total of 8 credits to complete a senior thesis. Registering for eight credits of ANTH 699: *Senior Thesis* can be done in two ways:

**The first option:** The student can register for four credits the first semester and receives an IA (indicating a continuing course) at the end of the semester. The student would then register for another four credits for the second semester. At the end of that semester, when the student's work is complete, s/he will receive a final grade for both semesters. The "IA" from the previous semester will be replaced with the final grade, and the same grade will be recorded for the second semester.

**The second option:** The student registers for eight credits for the first semester and gets an IA at the end of the semester. The student continues the project during the second semester, and upon completion at the end of the second semester, will receive a final grade (the IA will change to the final grade). The student does not register for any credits in the second semester, but simply continues the work. However, be aware this may affect the student's financial aid status since s/he may be registered for fewer credits. Therefore, the first option may be better for students who receive financial aid.

**Note:** Previous course work (study abroad, internships, etc.) involving ethnographic research can be used as a basis for completion of a senior thesis (four credits) *only* if the research was approved by UNH's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects prior to beginning the study abroad experience or internship. Again, early planning is essential!

### **Criteria for Fulfillment of Thesis Credits**

A final draft of the senior thesis should be no longer than 150 pages. The thesis must include a complete bibliography, with complete references to all material cited in the text. It is expected that the thesis will go through at least three drafts before the thesis advisor accepts the final draft. The precise role of the second reader is a matter of negotiation but at a minimum, the second reader will comment on the penultimate draft and approve the final draft. (Final grades are negotiated between the advisor and second reader.)

A schedule for completion of each stage of the thesis (research, literature review, first draft, second draft, etc.) must be devised not later than one month into the first semester of the project. If a student does not adhere to the work schedule for the first semester of credit, a terminal grade will be submitted at the end of the first semester. The student **will not be** allowed to enroll for a second semester.

Regular meetings are negotiated between the student and his/her thesis advisor and second reader. All drafts must be submitted on time, either in paper format or through email as negotiated with the advisor.

The penultimate draft must be submitted to both the advisor and the second reader **by the midterm** of the second semester. (The midterm is determined by each semester's academic calendar.) The last day to submit the final draft is the last day of final exam week.

### **Content of the Thesis**

The thesis must be based on original research. Original research can consist of the analysis of archaeological materials, visual media, archival documents, library research (secondary research materials), ethnographic research or some combination of these.

The thesis must have a research hypothesis or central argument and a review of relevant scholarly (and in some cases, non-scholarly) literature. It should include the student's findings substantiated with evidence.

### **Completed Senior Thesis**

It is recommended that students examine sample theses completed by our majors in the glass case outside Room 308, Huddleston Hall.

Completed theses must be submitted with a cover sheet that includes the title, the student's name, the names and signatures of the advisor and second reader, and the date completed.

The final draft should be double spaced, with one-inch margins on all sides. All formatting (including references) should conform to the style guide provided by the American Anthropological Association (AAA) on the AAA website (<http://www.aaanet.org/publications/guidelines.cfm>), or according to a style guide negotiated between the faculty advisor and the student.

The Dimond Library archives senior theses in order to make them available to the general public. Students, not advisors, are responsible for providing a copy of their senior thesis for the library. (The library's archivist requires one bound copy of the thesis, photocopied or laser printed onto permanent, low-acid/archive quality paper.)

The Department of Anthropology requires an electronic copy of the final draft (email to Anthropology Administrative Assistant [cas24@unh.edu](mailto:cas24@unh.edu)) and one bound copy of the senior thesis (given to the Anthropology Administrative Assistant). The thesis may be put on display in the Department of Anthropology and will be permanently housed in the Department's library, where it will be accessible to students, faculty and staff.