

**ENGLISH UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH HONORS PROGRAM**  
**EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY GUIDELINES FOR SENIOR HONORS**  
**THESIS IN ENGLISH FOR SPRING SEMESTER**

The Senior Honor's Thesis represents an in-depth, capstone experience designed to provide honors students with opportunities to develop a deeper knowledge of English, a closer intellectual interaction with faculty, and more complete preparation for their career goals.

The Senior Honor's Thesis must use primary materials in the field of study as well as secondary sources, such as biography and criticism. The thesis should represent a student's most sustained research as an undergraduate. It must be academically honest and in full compliance with ethical guidelines. An approved Senior Honors Thesis that has been orally presented in public is required for graduation as an English Honors student from East Tennessee State University.

**ENROLLMENT**

Typically, the Senior Honors Thesis is a yearlong project for which the student enrolls for six hours credit during the last two semesters of the senior year. Initial preparation for the thesis should begin in the final semester of one's junior year, however, and should follow the approved timetable.

A typical schedule requires that the student complete the majority of all library work plus initial analyses by the end of fall semester, so that the spring semester allows ample time for the actual writing of the thesis. A student should plan on working a minimum of six to nine hours per week on the thesis project. Throughout the project, each student should engage in careful planning, thorough research, thoughtful analysis, good writing, and enthusiastic work.

**THESIS COMMITTEE**

A second semester junior honors student should choose a thesis committee in conjunction with the English URHP director. The committee must consist of a thesis professor and a second reader, both from the English Department. The thesis professor is responsible for directing the thesis and seeing that the student meets all deadlines and fulfills the expectations of the prospectus. A thesis director will receive one hour of DIS, up to a maximum of three hours per semester for three theses.

**THESIS FORMAT**

The thesis should be considered a manuscript that may be submitted for publication in a scholarly journal. It must follow the guidelines of the Modern Language Association. The final copy must be submitted via eThesis. The thesis should involve the student in intensive research of a topic in literature, rhetoric, or language. It should be twenty to thirty pages in length, the

emphasis being on quality rather than quantity. Works of fiction, drama, poetry, or personal essays may not be submitted as a senior thesis.

### **PROSPECTUS**

The senior honors student should write a 2-5 page prospectus clearly describing the objective of the thesis, its scope and limitations, and a preliminary bibliography of 7-12 sources to indicate that sufficient secondary material exists to support the thesis project. The prospectus should be signed by both the student and the thesis professor and should be shown to all faculty members who are asked to serve as readers. In writing the prospectus, keep in mind that it is good to be up front with what you will cover and what you will omit. See the following excerpts: This study considers only those poems by Dickey that relate to World War II. Being able to review the poet's personal papers at the Barrett Library—which I am unable to do at this time—could influence, and therefore make tentative, my conclusions.

### **RECOMMENDED TIMETABLE**

The following timetable establishes deadlines based on spring thesis registration. In the event of an alternative registration, deadlines should be adjusted accordingly.

1. November 15 of Junior year: Choose a thesis professor in consultation with the English Honors Director.
2. October 1 of Senior year: Meet with the thesis professor and discuss a prospectus.
3. November 1 of Senior year: Sign the prospectus and present it to the thesis professor for his or her signature. Choose second reader in consultation with the English URHP Director. Give copies of the signed prospectus to the English URHP Director and the readers.
4. February 15: Present the first draft of the thesis to the thesis professor for review.
5. March 19: Present the second draft of the thesis to the thesis professor and readers.
6. April 1: In conjunction with the English URHP Director, set a date for a thesis presentation to be completed before April 20. Make arrangements for publicity.
7. April 15: Upload electronic version of completed thesis, signed by the thesis professor via eThesis.

For more extensive instructions on thesis submissions go to:

<https://www.etsu.edu/honors/thesis/ethesis.php>