

**IMPORTANT DEADLINES FOR HONORS SENIOR THESES/PROJECTS
(HONOR 490A and B)**

I. Thesis/Project Proposal¹

A copy of the approved thesis/project proposal must be submitted to the office of the Honors Program Director **NO LATER THAN THE EIGHTH (8th) WEEK** of the student's penultimate (second to last) semester prior to graduation.

Examples:

If you plan to graduate in May 2010, you must submit your proposal no later than the eighth week of the fall 2009 semester.

If you plan to graduate in December of 2010, you must submit your proposal no later than the eighth week of the spring 2010 semester.

II. Thesis/Project²

A copy of the thesis/project must be submitted to every member of the examining committee **AT LEAST ONE (1) WEEK** prior to the date of the oral defense.

An oral defense of the Honors Senior Thesis/Project must be completed **AT LEAST FOUR (4) WEEKS** prior to the date of commencement.

A final copy of the thesis/project must be submitted to the office of the Honors Program Director **AT LEAST TWO (2) WEEKS** prior to the date of commencement.

¹ The maximum length of a proposal is 1,000 words

² The minimum length of a thesis is 30 pages (text only; excluding bibliography, title page, acknowledgments, etc.). Exceptions will be made for special cases, such as a creative project.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Students in the Honors Program will conduct independent research, engage in problem-solving projects, and pursue the creative expression of ideas via the Senior Thesis requirement. The Honors Senior Thesis/Project is meant to be the culmination of a student's Honors experience. It gives the student an opportunity to conduct *original research or a project*³ with a Faculty Advisor. The regulations adopted by the Board of Trustees of the California State University System define a thesis and a project as follows:

A **thesis** is the written product of a systematic study of a significant problem. It identifies the problem, states the major assumptions, explains the significance of the undertaking, sets forth the sources for and methods of gathering information, analyzes data, and offers a conclusion or recommendation. A thesis can include evaluating existing literature via a literature review. It does not require experimentation and testing on human subjects.

A **project** is a significant undertaking appropriate to the fine and applied arts or to professional fields. It evidences originality and independent thinking, appropriate form and organization, and a rationale.

To help in distinguishing between a thesis and a project, it may be useful to think in terms of their differences in *purpose*. At the most basic level, the purpose of a thesis is to study a problem, not to create a product. The purpose of a project is to produce a product (i.e., portfolio, business plan, etc)

The Honors Senior Thesis/Project requirement creates and promotes direct connection between students and faculty in an academically enriching environment, and is students' opportunity to be a scholar--someone who contributes to knowledge. One of the outcomes of the Honors Senior Thesis/Project and accompanying examination process ("oral defense") is that it exposes Honors Program students to the scholastic rigors and academic requirements that are required of students in a post-baccalaureate program. While theses typically take the form of a written document, other formats may also be accepted (e.g., recital or exhibition) with the Honors Director's approval and if they comply with all the relevant policies and procedures set forth in this document.

³ The Honors Program Director will approve equivalent projects on a case-by-case basis only.

The Honors Senior *Thesis* is expected to take two semesters to complete, while the Honors Senior *Project* only takes one semester to complete (the semester you are graduating). Students completing the *Thesis* need to enroll in HONOR 490A in the fall semester of the senior year for preparation. Students completing the *Thesis* must also enroll in HONOR 490B during the spring of the senior year). The process of completing the thesis/project requires four steps:

1. First the student must identify an area of inquiry and form the Supervisory Committee.
2. Next, the student must complete and submit a thesis/project proposal for review. Students will prepare the proposal in consultation with their supervisors and then submit it to the Honors Program Director.
3. Third, after the proposal has been reviewed, defended, and approved, the student will write the thesis/project.
4. Finally, the student will orally discuss and defend the Honors Senior Thesis/Project in front of the Examining Committee.

HONORS SENIOR THESIS/PROJECT SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE

The Honors Program student has the responsibility to form a Supervisory Committee consisting of at least two (2) members: a Faculty Advisor and a “Reader.” The Reader should be from the same academic field (department) as the Faculty Advisor. These two Committee members must:

1. Be available to consult with the student throughout the course of the thesis/project process,
2. Attend the required meeting(s), and
3. Be prepared to uphold the quality standards of the program.

The Faculty Advisor is the primary academic mentor and assumes the role of the student's advisor for the Honors Senior Thesis/Project. The Faculty Advisor should be a tenured or tenure-track professor in the thesis/project subject area, as he/she will advise on research and content matters. The Reader(s) will review thesis/project drafts and advise the student if the Faculty Advisor is unavailable. The Reader(s) should supplement the Faculty Advisor, so that together the two possess balanced resources in the topic area. **It is critical the student maintain close contact with the Faculty Advisor throughout the project. This means scheduling weekly or bi-weekly meetings with the Faculty Advisor for the entire duration of the thesis/project (i.e., one to two semesters).**

To formalize the agreement with the Faculty Advisor and Reader(s), the student must submit a Thesis/Project Proposal Form signed by the Faculty Advisor and the Reader(s). Your Faculty Advisor and Reader(s) are not officially on your Committee until their signed form has been submitted to the Honors Program Office and approved by the Honors Program Director.

HONORS THESIS/PROJECT PROPOSAL

Once the area of academic inquiry has been identified and the Supervisory Committee has been formed, the student must prepare and submit an Honor Senior Thesis/Project Proposal on the approved form (see p. 20-21 for the form). Thesis/project proposals must be submitted to the office of the Honors Program Director **NO LATER THAN THE EIGHTH (8th) WEEK** of the student's penultimate (second to last) semester prior to graduation.

The Proposal will include:

- The title of the thesis/project,
- The name of the Supervisory Committee Faculty Advisor,
- The name(s) of the Supervisory Committee Reader(s), and
- A description of the proposed research or project area.

The title should indicate as clearly as possible the area of research or project, but it is understood that this title may change.

It is recommended that the proposal's description contains a brief statement in non-technical language describing the purpose of the research or project, its relationship to existing work in the area, and the contribution that the researcher hopes to make to the advancement of knowledge in the field.

The maximum length of a proposal is 1,000 words.

THESIS/PROJECT FORMAT

When the proposal has been approved, the student may begin writing the Honors Senior Thesis/Project. Students should use the stylistic guidelines of your academic discipline (e.g., Chicago, APA, MLA) consistently throughout the thesis. In addition, the student must adhere to the following format guidelines:

1. **Paper**

The thesis must be printed on **white** 8.5" X 11" (letter size) copy-quality (20 lb.) acid-free paper.

2. **Typescript**

The thesis must be printed using 12-point Times New Roman (or equivalent) font. The text should double-spaced and printed on one side of the paper only. (Footnotes and long quotations may be single-spaced.) The entire thesis must be in the same type. The final copy of the thesis must be printed using a laser printer.

3. **Margins**

The left margin must be 1.5 inches (for binding purposes).
The right, top, and bottom margins must be 1.0 inch.

Please note: margin requirements apply to EVERY page, including illustrations (tables, figures, charts), the abstract, appendices, and title page.

4. **Running Headers**

Do NOT use running heads to put title, name, chapter, etc., on each page.

5. **Pagination**

In a typical manuscript, the pagination of the preliminary matter is ordered and numbered as follows:

Title Page (no page number)

Certificate Page (no page number)

Acknowledgments (with Roman numeral page number)

Abstract (with Roman numeral page number)

Table of Contents (with Roman numeral page number)

List of Tables (with Roman numeral page number)

List of Figures or Illustrations (with Roman numeral page number)

For the remainder of the thesis/project, including the introduction, main body, illustrations, appendices, and bibliography, Arabic numerals are used starting with 1. (See page 19 for an example of the Introduction page).

6. Preparation of Title Page

The title page must be prepared in the format shown on page 12.

7. Preparation of Certificate Page

The certificate page must be prepared in the format shown on page 13. Following a successful oral examination, this page will be signed by the three members of the examining committee. One of the bound theses will contain the original signed certificate page and the other bound copy will include a photocopy of the signed certificate page.

8. Acknowledgements Page

This is where students may want to thank members of the supervisory and examining committee, family or close friends whose guidance and support contributed to the successful completion of the thesis/project. Any financial support received from a research foundation, the university, or a private company should be acknowledged in this section. See page 14 for an example.

9. Abstract

Each thesis must contain an abstract that is less than 250 words in length. The certificate page must be prepared in the format shown on page 15. The abstract is expected to give a succinct account of the thesis so that a reader can decide whether to read the complete work. The abstract is inserted immediately after any acknowledgments and before the table of contents.

10. Table of Contents and List of Tables, Figures, and Illustrations

The Table of Contents, List of Tables, and List of Figures or Illustrations, where applicable, should follow the abstract. See examples on pages 16, 17, and 18.

11. Appendices

Materials copied from other sources must meet the same requirements as the body of the paper. Copies from books, maps, etc., must be clean and legible.

RESPONSIBLE RESEARCH

The student must adhere to the guidelines of responsible research when completing the thesis. Responsible research means using reputable sources, citing all sources, and never plagiarizing. No project containing plagiarized content will receive credit, and the student will not graduate from the Honors Program. IRB review is only required if research findings are intended to draw general conclusions beyond the populations from which the data is gathered and which are made available to the scientific community via publication in a peer reviewed journal or professional conference. Student projects/class assignments undertaken with the intention of also presenting findings at a student oriented conference (e.g., the SDSU Student Research Symposium) or published in a student oriented journal (e.g., McNair Scholar Newsletter) do NOT require IRB review as participation in these activities is not considered to contribute to generalizable knowledge.

ORAL DEFENSE

Honors Senior Thesis/Project Examining Committee.

An Honors Senior Thesis/Project Examining Committee consists of a minimum of THREE (3) faculty members:

1. The Faculty Advisor (from the Supervisory Committee)
2. The Reader(s) (from the Supervisory Committee)
3. The Honors Program Director

Additional faculty members are welcome to be a part of the Examining Committee and attend the Oral Defense at the student's invitation. A copy of the thesis must be submitted to every member of the Examining Committee AT LEAST ONE (1) WEEK prior to the date of the oral defense.

The Honors Student is responsible for coordinating and scheduling the date, time, and place of the oral defense. The oral defense of the Honors Senior Thesis must be completed AT LEAST FOUR (4) WEEKS prior to the date of commencement. ALL COMMITTEE MEMBERS MUST AGREE TO BE PRESENT ON THE DATE SET FOR THE ORAL DEFENSE.

Results of the Oral Defense

The result of the oral defense will be reported to the Director of the Honors Program on the Oral Defense Report Form⁴ (see p.22 for the form), which will be taken to the defense by the student.

This form will be completed and signed by the Faculty Advisor of the thesis/project and the members of Examining Committee. Where applicable, brief details of revisions required should be included under the "comments" heading. A copy of this form should be transmitted to the student and the Honors Program Director.

Results of the Oral Defense - Defined

Accepted

The committee agrees that the thesis/project is acceptable without revisions.

Accepted Pending Minor Revisions

The committee agrees that the thesis/project is acceptable pending minor revisions, such as corrections of typographical errors or changes of a minor

⁴ The Oral Examination Report Form may be picked up from the Honors Program Office

editorial nature. It is the Faculty Advisor's responsibility to ensure that such corrections are made.

Accepted Pending Specific Revisions

The committee agrees that the thesis/project is acceptable pending changes, which may include insertion or deletions. Such changes would be of the sort that do not radically modify the development/argument of the thesis but which go beyond minor revisions. The practical criterion will be that the committee is able to specify such changes with precision. It is the responsibility of the Faculty Advisor and the supervisory committee to ensure that all such changes are made.

Referred Pending Major Revisions

The committee agrees that the thesis requires substantive changes in order to be acceptable. The Honors Program Director and the Faculty Advisor must supply detailed reasons for this decision and all members of the committee must see these changes. One of the following alternative procedures, to be agreed on by the committee before the examination is adjourned, must be used:

- a. The committee reconvenes within three (3) months to examine the work;
- b. Circulate the revised thesis/project within three (3) months to all members, who will then inform the Honors Program Director in writing, as to whether they feel their requirements have been met.

Failed

The committee agrees that even with major revisions the thesis/project is not acceptable.

The oral examination requirement is met if:

1. The committee unanimously accepts the thesis/project with or without minor or specified revisions, OR
2. There is not more than one vote for major revisions or failure, or more than one abstention.

The candidate fails the thesis oral examination if more than two members of the examining committee vote for failure. Abstentions will not be regarded as votes for failure. If neither of the above applies, the thesis shall be referred for major revisions. A thesis cannot be referred for major revisions more than once.

Once the candidate's thesis/project has been approved for acceptance, the Faculty Advisor, in consultation with the Supervisory Committee and the Honors Director, will recommend a final grade for the course.

PROCEDURES FOLLOWING THE ORAL DEFENSE

What happens after the student has successfully defended and completed any final requested changes to their thesis or project? After the Examining Committee has signed the Certificate (signature) page, in order to graduate with the designation of Honors Program on the final transcript, the student must hand in a final copy of the thesis/project to the Honors Program Director's office at least TWO WEEKS prior to graduation.

Binding (for Theses only)

The Honors Program student is responsible for having their thesis bound. Students will take **a final copy of the thesis, printed on acid free paper** to Thesis Processing at Montezuma Publishing on campus. The Honors Program will cover the cost of binding for ONE hard cover copy to be cataloged in the university's main library stacks. Students will need to purchase their own copy. Montezuma Publishing is located at Suite 104 (outside entrance—look for the awning) in the Industrial Technology Building (beside the Physics Building). For binding questions, please call Ryan Dee or Erin Clark at 594.7551.

(Sample Title Page)

RACIAL BACKGROUND AND JUDICIAL ELECTIONS: DETERMINING THE
VOTING PATTERNS OF MINORITY STATE SUPREME COURT JUSTICES

LAWRENCE A. CISNEROS

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty
of San Diego State University in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the completion
of the University Honors Program

San Diego State University
San Diego, California

May 2009

(Sample Certificate Page)

San Diego State University
Honors Program

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty
of San Diego State University in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the completion
of the University Honors Program

Racial Background and Judicial Elections: Determining the Voting Patterns of Minority
State Supreme Court Justices

Lawrence A. Cisneros

Approved:

Dr. Madhavi McCall, Advisor

Dr. Stacey Sinclair

Dr. Edward Heck

May 2009

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first like to thank my friends and family for their financial and emotional support to complete this thesis. Thanks to Dr. Heck who with short notice agreed to guide me in this process and provided incisive comments, which greatly improved this thesis. This project would not be possible without the encouragement and structure from the Honors Program's staff and resources. In particular, I thank Jessica Savalla for her kind words of support and guidance and Dr. Stacey Sinclair for allowing me to participate in the thesis classes, helping fund my trip to the Western Regional Honors Conference in Spokane, Washington, and guidance throughout the year.

I would most importantly like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. McCall, under whose supervision I chose this topic and began this thesis. I especially thank her for providing the necessary tables, briefing the cases which provided the data, and taking the time to help me throughout the year. This project would not have been possible without her unwavering support. I would also like to thank her for encouraging me to pursue higher levels of education.

RACIAL BACKGROUND AND JUDICIAL ELECTIONS: DETERMINING THE VOTING PATTERNS OF MINORITY STATE SUPREME COURT JUSTICES

Lawrence A. Cisneros

B.A., International Security and Conflict Resolution

San Diego State University, 2009

There continues a heated debate on whether and how race has an impact on a justice's voting behavior. This study will examine how race, controlling for the retention method, affects state Supreme Court justices' voting patterns. Principally, I posit that limiting the scope of inquiry to judicial voting disparities based on either race or retention method diminishes the accuracy of the conclusions derived from such analysis. Rather, I posit that studying both variables will more accurately illustrate each voting determinant independently of one another, but more importantly, how they affect each other. The findings of the study on whether white justices differ from non-white justices in their decision making, while accounting for whether the justices are appointed or elected, in cases argued under the Fourth Amendment will be presented.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

When Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts swore in Barack Obama as the first African American president of the United States, the importance of having racial diversity in governing positions of power reemerged as a point of conversation among scholars and citizens alike. Various institutions and professional fields intend to increase the ethnic make-up of their members for their own purposes, as well as from pressure from other societal forces. Minority groups in the U.S. intend to continue advancing their members to positions that yield authority and power in society – business, medicine, engineering, law, politics, etc. For instance, leading figures in the legal profession want to continue assisting minority undergraduate students efforts to get into law school, as only less than 10% of lawyers are from minority groups⁵ (but account for more than 33% of the total U.S. population).⁶ In the last ten years, minorities' pace into the legal profession has decreased⁷ and will continue to decrease in the next ten years, although they made significant gains over the past half century.⁸

⁵ McCarthy, Nancy. "ABA study finds minority lawyers have 'miles to go' in the profession." California Bar Journal (2005). Mar. 2005. The State Bar of California. Dec. 2008

⁶ The United States of America. U.S. Department of Commerce. U.S. Census Bureau. Minority Population Tops 100 Million. By Robert Bernstein. Vol. CB07-70. Washington, D.C.: Public Information Office, 2007. Minority Population Tops 100 Million. 17 May 2007. U.S. Census Bureau. Jan. 2009 <<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/population/010048.html>>.

⁷ Although the number of minority applicants has not decreased, minority enrollment in law schools has decreased since 1992 – Mexican-American enrollments have dropped nearly 10%. Quintero, Cristina, and Jeffrey Penn. "A Disturbing Trend In Law School Diversity." 2007. Society of American Law Schools (SALT) and the Lawyering in the Digital Age Clinic at the Columbia University School of Law. 15 Apr. 2009 <<http://www2.law.columbia.edu/civilrights/>>.

⁸ *Supra note 1*

San Diego State University
Honors Program
Honors Thesis Proposal/Project Proposal Form

To be completed by the student

Student Name: _____

Name of Faculty Advisor: _____

Name of Faculty Reader: _____

Title of Thesis or Project: _____

Purpose of Thesis or Project (attach an abstract of one-two pages):

Student Signature

Date

To be completed by the Faculty Advisor

Proposed Meeting Dates (regularly scheduled meetings encouraged):

Fall semester:



Spring semester:



Proposed Dates for Receiving Drafts:

Fall semester:



Spring semester:



Faculty Advisor Signature

Date

Faculty Reader Signature

Date

To be completed by the Honors Program Director

Proposal Approved

Proposal Denied

Honors Program Director Signature

Date

San Diego State University
Honors Program
Oral Defense Report Form

Name:

- Accepted
- Accepted Pending Minor Revisions
- Accepted Pending Specific Revisions
- Referred Pending Major Revisions
- Failed

Comments

Faculty Advisor

Reader

Honors Program Director

Other

Date