Honors College Senior Thesis Advisor/Advisee Recommended Guidelines

1) In most cases, the advisee will enroll in a senior thesis seminar or capstone course in the major; capstone courses can vary, depending on the major. Some students may enroll in an Honors 490 independent study instead, if they wish to receive credits for the thesis and don’t have a required capstone course in the major, in which case the thesis advisor will instruct and grade the advisee’s Honors 490 section; advisees can discuss this option with their assigned Honors College advisor, who can then email a request to Jason.Roush@umb.edu to add the Honors 490 independent study, prior to the end of the add/drop period. Please note that in some cases, the advisee may choose to complete the thesis without taking any course for credit, but the advisee must still work with a selected thesis advisor.

2) The advisee should plan to meet with their selected thesis advisor in the first or second week of the semester to agree on a schedule of regular meetings, preferably at least once every two weeks for an hour each time. At their first meeting, the thesis advisor and advisee should work together to develop an overall thesis timeline with specific milestones for when certain phases/tasks relevant to the thesis will be achieved.

3) For each subsequent meeting with the thesis advisor, the advisee should be expected to meet some goal or milestone – for example, annotating a specific number of readings, developing a research proposal, compiling a bibliography/literature review, or describing specific tasks at an internship site. These meetings are meant to help the advisee in sharpening the focus of the thesis and moving closer to articulating the statement or problem that will be the subject of the research. Some advisees work on the thesis for one semester, while others work on a year-long thesis or project, so the advisee and thesis advisor should develop the thesis timeline and milestones accordingly, so that the advisee completes the thesis on time for graduation.

4) The advisee should come prepared with specific questions/comments for each meeting. The mentor will provide feedback and guidance, so that the advisee knows how to proceed and what changes to make as the thesis draft/project phases progress.

5) By the midpoint of the agreed-upon thesis timeline, the advisee should submit to the thesis advisor a draft of 10 - 15 pages (roughly 3,000 – 4,500 words), so that the thesis advisor can provide specific feedback for the student. Advisees who are working on a project-based thesis, rather than a traditional writing-intensive thesis, should determine with the thesis advisor a similar midpoint milestone to gauge their thesis progress and receive feedback. Typically, the advisee will submit segments of the thesis as they’re completed (10-page drafts every three weeks, for instance), and then incorporate the mentor’s feedback and comments through the revision process.

6) The required length for a completed senior thesis is 30 pages (roughly 9,000 words), with at least 15 research source citations, which must be submitted as a PDF or Microsoft Word document to Jason.Roush@umb.edu by the last day of final exams in the advisee’s graduation semester. Please note that advisees who are submitting a thesis for departmental Honors in the major as well may have higher length requirements, as specified by the major department or capstone instructor.

7) The advisee must also present the thesis publicly by the last day of final exams; a conference presentation or poster session, a public presentation in the major department, or an individual presentation for Honors College staff members and the thesis advisor (as well as any invited friends and family members) are all accepted forms of public presentation of the thesis. Many
departments schedule and host-research presentation days here on campus, so the advisee and thesis advisor should be sure to check with the major department about that presentation option.

(Updated: October 23rd, 2019)