Honors Thesis or Project: Proposal for Individually Contracted option

A proposal is required for each semester of honors thesis or project (499Y and/or 499T/P that is individually contracted. The proposal

- defines your honors research
- establishes a definitive list of goals, methodology, evaluation procedures, and faculty expectations
- serves with the contract as a binding agreement between you and your guidance committee
- protects you and your guidance committee from misunderstandings which could cause problems with grading or delays in your graduation clearance.

The details below are provided to assist with online contract submission via CHC Paths.

Part I: 499Y Honors Research Proposal - Semester Plan

Organize your 499Y-Semester Plan using the sub headers below. Consult your Honors Thesis or Project Committee Chair for guidance in writing your 499Y-Semester Plan. Your Committee Chair may request additional information or may require adjustments that reflect the professional standards within the department. Note: If you and your committee mutually agree upon changes to the initial plan, please submit a revised 499Y-Semester Plan (with your Committee Chair’s signature) to the CHC office.
1. STATEMENT

REGARDING THE GOAL OF THE THESIS OR PROJECT

What do you intend to research and hope to discover or create during your Honors Thesis or Project experience?

2. KEY READINGS

List the key readings for the 499Y semester.

3. COMMUNICATION

- How often will you meet with your Committee Chair?
- What are your Committee Chair’s expectations of such meetings?
- What time commitment is expected to be applied to your research between meetings with your Committee Chair? (For example, 10 hours of work per week.)

4. SPECIALIZED TRAINING

If work on your thesis or project should require specialized training (e.g., human/animal subjects testing, lab-safety instruction, survey technique), please specify the type of
training required and when and from whom that training will be obtained.

5. **METHODOLOGY**

- If you have already begun or will start your actual research early in the 499Y semester, then your 499Y-Semester Plan must include a description of the methodology that you and your Committee Chair have agreed upon.

- If your research will begin later in the 499Y semester, then your 499Y-Semester Plan must include a deadline date by which you and your Chair will have agreed upon your methodology. This agreement must precede the onset of your research, and the methodology must then be described in your proposal for the 499T/499P semester.

6. **TIMELINE**

Include **deadline dates** and **specific expectations** for:

- An assignment due before the end of the “Withdrawal Period” (see UMass Academic Calendar). E.g., a summary of the initially assigned readings, a draft of one or more sections of your Thesis or Project Proposal, or even a first draft of a chapter of your Thesis/Project
- Any other first-semester assignments (weekly lab reports, annotated bibliography, other benchmark) specified by your Committee Chair
- Selection of second committee member
- Online submission of the “499T/P Honors Thesis/Project Contract” form with affiliated Honors Thesis or Project Proposal. *(This deadline should be prior to the end of the 499Y semester.)*

Part II: 499T/P Honors Thesis/Project Proposal

**Organize your 499T Proposal using the sub headers below.** Consult your Honors Thesis or Project Committee Chair for guidance in writing your 499T/P Proposal. Your Committee Chair may request additional information or may require adjustments that reflect the professional standards within the department.
1. INTRODUCTION

What are you researching and why?

- General description of your Thesis or Project topic (about 1 page)
- Statement about the scientific problem or intellectual/creative intent (at least 1 page): description of objectives and hypotheses or other discipline-specific inquiry
- Explanation of the significance of the problem or justification of the creative intent (at least 1 page): e.g., relate the key literature to the problem or creative endeavor, and explain the study's importance to the advancement of knowledge in the discipline.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

What have other researchers already written/published on your topic?

- Demonstrate your understanding of the primary literature (about 5-15 pages) (text-based thesis writers should seek guidance from their Committee Chairs)
- Consult your Committee Chair about the key literature needed for your thesis or project manuscript and the formatting style used in your discipline for notes and bibliography (e.g., Chicago, MLA, APA, a specific Journal, etc.). Be sure to note they style you will be using.

3. METHOD

How are you conducting your research?

- What procedures or techniques are you using to gather information/data or to
• What resources or materials are you using in your research?
• If specialized training was required for your thesis or project, e.g., lab safety certification or human/animal testing, what training did you receive or are you receiving and from whom?

4. EVALUATION How will your work be reviewed and graded?

• What measurable goals does your 499 guidance committee expect you to accomplish during the final stages of your research/creative project?
• How will your committee provide feedback regarding your progress?
• How will your committee assess the viability of your research to produce an Honors Thesis or Project manuscript with oral defense?
• If you are registering for an Honors Project, be specific about the artifact that you will produce in addition to the Project manuscript, e.g., a novel, poetry collection, art DVD, case study, engineering design, story board, film DVD, musical composition CD or DVD, etc.

5. COMMUNICATION What are the expectations about meetings with your Committee Chair and other Committee Member(s)? Be specific.

• How often are you meeting with your Committee Chair? How often will you meet with the full committee?
• What are your Committee Chair’s expectations of such meetings? What are your committee members’ expectations about meeting with you?
• What time commitment is expected to be applied to your research between meetings with your Committee Chair? (For example, 10 hours of work per week.)

6. TIMELINE

• What are the dates and expectations for periodic review of your research results? (weekly? bi-weekly?)
• When is your first outline due? When is your thesis or project manuscript
  ◦ First draft due?
  ◦ Second draft due?
  ◦ Final completed manuscript and artifacts (where applicable) due?
• What is the date and setting for your oral defense? (e.g., informal with 499T/P committee members only or public defense open to others)

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