



Conservation Biology Major

Honors Thesis / Senior Thesis Proposal Form

Student

Name:

Student ID:

Thesis Semesters (ex:F'28, Spr'29):

Faculty Primary Investigator

Name:

Research Mentor if applicable:

Department of Enrollment:

Title of thesis project:

A thesis is typically 3 credits over two semesters☐

This is a Senior Honors Thesis 681/682

☐

This is a Senior Thesis 691/692

☐This is a dual honors thesis, see additional requirements at <https://honors.ls.wisc.edu/dual-thesis-authorization/>

For the **Senior Honors Thesis** courses **681** and **682**, you must enroll in a combination of 6 credits, typically 3 credits per semester in your final two semesters. These two courses should be taken sequentially.

Your **Thesis Proposal** is due at the end of the first week of the first thesis semester.

To complete the Conservation Biology senior thesis requirement the student must submit their completed thesis to the Conservation Biology Advisor via email by the end of finals week of the second thesis semester. Your Faculty Primary Investigator/Research Mentor will be responsible for evaluating your thesis and submitting an appropriate course grade.

Conservation Biology Thesis Proposal

Include below, a paragraph to describe what will be studied that includes the **experimental question** and **rationale** for this experiment. **It is important that you include the project's relevance to conservation biology**, feel free to attach an additional page if needed.

Meeting Time and Place: (How often will the student & faculty/mentor meet? How many hours is the student expected to work on the project & where?)

Earned Credits: The student will enroll in ____ number of credits. Per UW-Madison policy during fall and spring semesters, 1 credit translates to approximately 3-4 hours of work per week. The student is expected to complete a minimum of ____ (3-4 multiplied by number of credits) hours of work a week during the semester specified above.

I have read this thesis proposal, and I approve of its content.

Faculty (PI) Signature: _____

Senior Thesis Guidelines

The Conservation Biology Major Senior Thesis and Senior Honors Thesis is a two-semester, 6 credit research commitment on a topic related to conservation biology that you and your faculty mentor agree on. The result is an academic paper, often of publishable quality. Thesis projects are most successful if a student contacts a faculty member they would like to work with at least one semester before planning to start researching. Thesis courses can be taken in any semester, including over the summer.

Deadlines:

Proposal: This proposal form must be emailed to the Conservation Biology major advisor by the end of the first week of the first semester of your thesis.

Thesis: Your completed thesis must be emailed to the Conservation Biology advisor before the last day of finals of the second semester of the thesis sequence.

Suggested Timelines: Senior year is an exceptionally busy time, so start early! Students who are successful at generating high-quality senior theses often work on their thesis throughout the two-semester course. It is helpful to set small goals for yourself to stay on track. Timing considerations can be found here: <https://honors.ls.wisc.edu/timeline-for-senior-thesis/>

Grading: The grade for the thesis is issued by the Faculty Primary Investigator supervising the thesis. During the first semester of the thesis, only "P" for progress or "I" for incomplete are given as placeholder grades. Once the final senior thesis has been submitted and reviewed, the thesis advisor will assign a letter grade that will serve as the grade for both semesters of the thesis.

Organization: The organization of the sections of your thesis will vary depending on the scope and field of the research you plan to present. The thesis may follow the format described below. However, in some cases you and your mentor may decide to write the thesis project up for publication. In this case, the formatting required by the journal you wish to submit to is entirely appropriate.

1. Abstract: Include a short (one-page) summary at the beginning of the thesis. An abstract is a fully self-contained capsule description of the thesis paper. It should contain parts 2-5 described below, with less detail as is used in the body of the thesis.
2. Introduction and Literature Review: This section is intended to introduce the questions addressed in the thesis. What question did you ask? What is the rationale for asking this question? Discuss gaps in our scientific understanding. How will your experiment attempt to fill these gaps? The introduction should provide a review of the relevant literature.
3. Materials and Methods: This section should describe, in detail, the materials and techniques used in the experiment. This should include experimental animals and statistical analysis. An interested colleague should be able to replicate your experiment based on the details in the methods section. If some of the techniques that you used are identical to that previously reported in the literature, you may insert the citation of this work into your methods section.
4. Results: Here is where you describe your experimental findings. You may also add to your narrative of results by adding figures and/or tables of the results. Figures and/or tables should be numbered and have legends. Figures and/or tables should be placed near where they are first referred to in the text.
5. Discussion and Conclusions: In this section, you will provide a summary and interpretation of the thesis findings. Discuss the conclusions that can be drawn from the data in light of the findings of other investigators, particularly if the conclusions appear to be in conflict with those of other labs. Describe where the field can go from here, based on your data.
6. References: All references cited in the text should be listed in a bibliographic listing at the end of the thesis.

Although there is no maximum or minimum page limit for a senior thesis, undergraduate research theses can be around 20 pages in length. Font and Margins: Use no smaller than 11 pt standard font (typically 12 or 11 pt font is preferred in a font such as Arial or Times New Roman), double-spaced, and 1-inch margins on all sides of the page.