HONORS IN THE MAJOR HANDBOOK

FSU Honors Program

2019 - 2020

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Introduction

This handbook provides information about the Honors in the Major (HITM) program at FSU, and shares outcomes rubrics that students and faculty may use throughout the HITM experience to collaboratively assess the student's performance, growth, and accomplishment. The guide begins by explaining the purpose of and eligibility criteria for HITM. It then moves into a breakdown of the general types of honors undergraduate research projects, followed by an explanation of the two main HITM requirements, paperwork submission deadlines, and HITM thesis credit registration details. Institutional Review Board reviews and resources are addressed, and the roles and responsibilities of HITM students, thesis directors, and supervisory committees are articulated. Frequently asked questions and undergraduate research resources are included at the end. After consulting this handbook, students and faculty should feel free to contact the faculty honors liaison in the student's major college, department, or program with additional questions.

Purpose of the Honors in the Major Thesis Project

Honors in the Major is a scholarly experience for students to incorporate knowledge and skills learned throughout their undergraduate career into a signature senior project. Many colleges and departments of FSU participate in the HITM program, which is intended to encourage talented juniors and seniors to undertake significant independent and original scholarship as part of the undergraduate experience in a framework similar to that of a thesis-based master's degree program.

Faculty mentorship is integral to the HITM experience. Students assemble and work with a faculty committee to select a topic, develop a prospectus, complete a written document based on their original scholarship or creative project, and orally defend their project before their committee. Working with faculty helps students develop relationships that foster their growth as researchers, practitioners, and future professionals in their field.

Completion of the HITM program is recognized by the distinction of graduating "With Honors," as designated on the transcript. A student who completes an HITM thesis project not only demonstrates high achievement in their major, but also positions themselves strongly for success in post-graduate opportunities like graduate school, professional school, fellowships, and careers.

Eligibility

Students must contact the University Honors Program in the semester before they intend to register for HITM thesis credits in order to submit a formal application to the program. Students do not need to be part of the University Honors Program to participate in HITM. An application to participate in the HITM program must show that the student has the required grades and credits, a proposed thesis topic, sufficient time prior to graduation to complete the project, a thesis director, and the approval of the chair, director, or area coordinator of the college, department, or program in which the student is majoring.

Any student who meets the following HITM admission requirements may apply to participate in the program. Additional requirements are in place for specific majors, so students should consult their major's honors liaison for more details:

- Must be a current FSU student
- Must be formally accepted into their major
- Must have at least a 3.2 GPA (FSU and Cumulative)
- Must have at least 60 completed college credits
- Must have at least 12 completed FSU credits
- Must have at least 2 semesters remaining until graduation

Types of Honors in the Major Thesis Projects

The HITM thesis project must focus on a research problem, theoretical issue, new creative work, professional challenge, or innovative area of application (e.g., design or technological innovation). All students who participate in the HITM program must conduct research that is appropriate to their field of study and vetted by their faculty supervisory committee. Generally speaking, undergraduate research can be grouped into three types:

1. Analytical
   - An analytical HITM thesis project is inquiry-based research driven by the investigation of a gap in academic knowledge represented by the current peer-reviewed academic literature.

2. Creative
   - A creative HITM thesis project is research grounded in artistic inquiry and versed in the works of relevant practitioners that aims to explore a political, cultural, economic, and/or social issue.

3. Applied/Experiential
   - An applied or experiential HITM thesis project is action-based research driven by an investigation of the state of academic, professional, and/or technical knowledge represented by current peer-reviewed academic literature, professional practice, and/or technical application.

Colleges, departments, and programs determine what types of projects are acceptable for their respective majors. If unsure how to proceed with an HITM thesis project idea, students should speak with their major's honors liaison and/or with a faculty mentor from their college, department, or program.

Honors in the Major Requirements: Written Portion and Oral Defense

Any HITM thesis project will consist of two components: (1) a written portion; and (2) an oral defense before a faculty supervisory committee.

I. **Written Portion**

Generally speaking, all HITM thesis projects will include a polished written work that cites relevant peer-reviewed literature to demonstrate the student's engagement with academic conversations in their field and to frame their project's contribution or intervention. This written product is what the student will submit to the DigiNole archive upon completing the HITM program.

The written portion of the HITM thesis project involves the creation of new knowledge or insights rather than merely a summary or synthesis of known facts or past work in the chosen area of study. It is more in-depth and demanding than a typical upper-division undergraduate paper.

Students completing analytical or applied/experiential thesis projects will produce a ten-page prospectus during their first semester of HITM that will then be developed into a final written work by the end of the second semester. In analytical or applied/experiential projects, the final written work typically includes: (a) a statement of the research problem being address; (b) background of the theoretical issue and past scholarship; (c) discussion of the methodology used in tackling the research problem; (d) presentation of the research results on analyzed data; (e) conclusions of the research; and (f) a list of cited academic peer-reviewed sources. See the Research Prospectus Outline in this handbook (Appendix F) for more information.

Students engaged in interpretive or original creative work in majors such as Creative Writing, Dance, Film, Music, Studio Art, and Theatre will produce a three-page prospectus that provides a clear description of the project's nature, purpose, relevant contexts for understanding the significance of the work, and projected timeline.

The final written report for a creative thesis should contain a minimum length of 10 pages of text, plus documentation (bibliography, appendices, images, etc.) **Please note that this written report is in addition to the creative work itself, even if the creative work is a written project (a screenplay, a short novel, poetry, etc.)** Students must submit this written report to the DigiNole archive upon the completion of the oral defense.

A written report for a creative HITM thesis project will thoughtfully reflect on, but is not limited to, two or more of the following: (a) historical, cultural, stylistic, analytic, or interpretive perspectives on roles or works performed; (b) a chronology of the conception and evolution of the project; (c) a description of the intention and significance of the project, tools and methods used and why chosen; and (d) an analysis of how the project compares to other works in its genre.

II. **Oral Defense**

Students are also required to defend their HITM thesis project in front of their faculty supervisory committee by the last day of classes in their second semester. The defense can take place in a classroom or conference room, or in cases of creative projects, in theaters, art galleries, or other performance venues. It is the student's responsibility to ensure the location is reserved and

available during the time of the defense. All members of the supervisory committee must be present at the time of the defense, although with modern technological advances, one faculty member may participate remotely if attendance in person is not possible. The student will make an oral presentation of 15 to 20 minutes, followed by a question-and-answer session of 30 to 40 minutes.

Honors in the Major Program Timeline and Deadlines

Throughout the HITM experience, students will need to submit signed forms to the Honors Program, each which corresponds to a different stage in the HITM approval process. Students can begin their HITM experience in the Fall, Spring, or Summer semesters. Remember that registration for HITM thesis credits is required for each semester of HITM.

1. **Application Semester:** Students should use the semester before the start of the HITM thesis project to prepare and submit their HITM application. The Application Semester should therefore be at least three semesters before the student plans to graduate.

   The first step in beginning the HITM application will be finding a thesis director. Most often, the thesis director is a tenured or tenure-track faculty member. However, Specialized Faculty and other permanent instructional and research staff are eligible to serve as a member of a supervisory committee so long as they have a terminal degree in the field of study (a Ph.D. for most academic programs) or have graduate faculty status. Students should consider faculty they have enjoyed working with, either in major requirement classes taken with the faculty member or previous research projects completed in collaboration with the faculty member. More information about how to approach and talk with potential thesis directors can be found in Appendix D of this handbook. If a student is unsure about their options, they can reach out to their major's honors liaison for guidance.

   Once a thesis director has been recruited, the student will work to clarify a working title for their proposed research project. Although this title may be changed, it should give a clear idea of what the student's proposed research will be about. The thesis director may also be able to share valuable insights on broadening or narrowing the scope of the proposed research

   The student will also need to discuss their timeline with the thesis director. They are required to complete a minimum of 2 semesters and 6 credit hours in order to earn HITM recognition. These semesters must be consecutive, with the exception of the Summer semester if the student will not be on campus. The student can take up to 9 credit hours of HITM thesis project work over 3 semesters, if necessary. All HITM requirements must be met, including the oral defense, before graduation from FSU and conferral of the bachelor's degree.

   Once a thesis director has been recruited, a working title has been developed, and a timeline has been identified, the student must complete and submit the HITM application. The application must be approved and signed by the thesis director, the Honors Liaison for the student's major, and the department chair or area coordinator. Once these signatures have been obtained, the student must turn in the application to the Honors Program office in room 2003 HSF by the application deadline. If the student or their college, department, or program

wish to retain a copy of the application, the student should inform the Honors Program staff as they turn the application in.

> **Students who wish to begin their HITM thesis project in the Summer or Fall semesters must hand in a signed copy of the [HITM Application](#) to the Honors Program office (HSF2003) by the last day of classes of the preceding Spring semester.**
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> **Students who wish to begin their HITM thesis project in the Spring semester must hand in a signed copy of the [HITM Application](#) to the Honors Program office (HSF2003) by the 13th Friday of the Fall semester.**
>
> **Psychology majors can apply online [here](#).**

2. **Prospectus Semester:** Students in their first semester of the HITM thesis project should begin with two concurrent tasks: recruiting two to three committee members and writing their research prospectus. With the guidance of the thesis director, the student will need to locate and recruit at least one faculty committee member from their major and one faculty member outside of the department which houses the student's major. A fourth committee member from any department at FSU is optional. See pages 10 and 11 of this handbook for additional information about the makeup of the supervisory committee.

   By the end of the Prospectus Semester, the thesis director and all members of the supervisory committee will have to approve the student's research prospectus. The research prospectus serves as a research proposal, giving the committee background information about the project and similar research, outlining the methods, and discussing the expectations for the thesis projects' outcome. Specific requirements for a prospectus are discipline-specific, and students should contact their thesis director to discuss expectations about format, length, and content.

   The purpose of the prospectus is to define the scope of a student's HITM thesis project and to clarify the steps they will take in researching, writing, creating, and/or implementing the work. A strong prospectus typically includes some, if not all, the following elements:

   - A description of the thesis project's nature and purpose, the issue(s) to be addressed, and their significance to the student's field
   - A critical review of related work in the student's field, to provide background information and demonstrate the need for the project
   - The proposed research methods, along with an explanation of why the chosen approach is appropriate for the proposed thesis project
   - A preliminary bibliography

> **Students must turn in a hard copy of their prospectus with a signed copy of the [Prospectus Approval Form](#) to the Honors Program office (HSF2003) by the Friday of the 7th week of classes.**
>
> **Psychology majors can submit online [here](#).**

3. **Defense Semester:** Students in their second semester complete their HITM thesis project by way of a formal defense in front of their supervisory committee during their final term of thesis project work. Following the defense, the thesis must be approved by all members of the faculty committee.

   Within the first four weeks of the Defense Semester, students must collaborate with their thesis director to schedule the day, time, and location of their defense and get it approved by the full faculty committee. All committee members are expected to be present at the defense. Students with creative HITM thesis projects that require special space reservations, technical considerations, or coordination of performers may want to consider the Defense Announcement early for logistical reasons. Once the defense is scheduled, the student will complete the [Defense Announcement](#) and submit it to the Honors Program Office (HSF2003) by no later than 4:30 pm Eastern the day of the posted deadline.

   All students should use the [HITM thesis template](#) to have a properly formatted title page and signature page for their thesis.

   Once the student has successfully defended their HITM thesis project, they must obtain their committee members' signatures on the [Defense Certificate](#) form and submit it to the Honors Program office in HSF2003 no later than 4:30 pm Eastern the day of the posted deadline.

> **The [Defense Announcement](#) deadline is the Friday of the 4th week of classes. The [Defense Certificate](#) deadline is the last day of classes.**
>
> **Psychology majors can submit online [here](#).**

   Note that students also have the option to submit an [Embargo Request Form](#) at the same time they submit the signed Defense Certificate. The Embargo Request Form is used to request that the HITM thesis project be kept hidden on the [DigiNole](#) archive for a specific amount of time. It is not recommended for general use but is available as an option if the display on DigiNole could negatively impact the student's future plans, particularly for creative projects and papers in line for publication. This form is optional and should be signed by the student and the thesis director if deemed necessary.

4. **Submission to the Archive:** All undergraduate theses published at FSU are housed in the DigiNole archive. Students must submit their final signed thesis to the archive as a .PDF file by the last day of classes in order to officially earn Honors in the Major recognition on their transcript.

Registration for Thesis Credit Hours

Students accepted to the HITM program must register for a 4000-level thesis course offered by their major department or program for each semester of HITM thesis project work. Students should contact their major academic advisor or departmental coordinator to start the registration process as early as possible. If the student's college, department, or program requests confirmation that they have been accepted into the Honors in the Major program, the student can provide a copy of the acceptance email they receive. The drop/add period ends the first Thursday of the semester at 11:59 pm Eastern, so all credit hours must be added to the schedule by this deadline. Note that late registration fees apply to 4000-level thesis courses. A minimum of 6 total credit hours divided across 2 semesters is required in order to earn HITM recognition.

Deadline Extension Request and Program Removal Appeals Process

Students admitted to the HITM program are expected to meet paperwork deadlines and thesis milestones, as well as maintain a minimum 3.2 GPA. Missed deadlines or milestones and/or dipping below a 3.2 GPA may result in removal from the HITM program.

Students should proactively plan with the thesis director on a schedule for meeting necessary deadlines and milestones each semester. If extraordinary circumstances prevent adherence to deadlines or milestones, both the student and thesis director should together send a single email to HITM@fsu.edu at least three business days before the deadline with an explanation and a request for an extension. Extension requests will not be considered if they do not come from both the student and the thesis director. Decisions regarding extension requests will be communicated to the student and thesis director within three business days of receipt. Extension requests made after a missed deadline or milestone will not be considered.

Students have the right to appeal their removal from the HITM program if they believe the decision was unfair. They may do so by completing the Appeal Form stating the details of their situation, the reason for reconsideration, and their detailed plan for resuming thesis work and completing the HITM program within the allowed timeframe, should the appeal be granted. Once the Appeals Form is submitted, no additional edits are allowed. Appeals must be submitted within two weeks (including holidays and weekends) from when email notification of removal from the HITM program is sent. A blind reviewer will evaluate the submission on the student's behalf, and the final decision will be communicated to the student by email within two weeks of receipt of the appeals request. Please note that each student has only one opportunity to submit an appeal. If an appeal is granted and a student is subsequently removed from the HITM program due to failure to meet requirements, no additional appeals are possible, and removal from the program is final.

Human Subject Research and the Institutional Review Board

Honors in the Major thesis projects that involve individuals as study subjects (human research) generally require advance review to ensure that subjects are adequately protected against research risks. Depending upon research parameters, reviews are performed by the Office for Human Subjects Protection (OHSP) and/or the FSU Institutional Review Board (IRB). These reviews are required by law. The OHSP and IRB review research to determine what protections are required. Review requirements and protections are generally calibrated to research risks. Human research may not begin until these reviews are completed and OHSP or IRB approval has been extended. If a study will involve interaction or intervention with individuals for research purposes, or involve collection of identifiable private information, the study must submit an application for OHSP or IRB review. Depending upon study parameters and OHSP review, some projects may be exempted by PHSP from further IRB review. Other activities, such as scholarly and journalistic activities such as oral history, journalism, biography literary criticism, legal research, and historical scholarship projects, may not be defined as research subject to further OHSP or IRB review, provided certain conditions are satisfied.

Because OHSP and IRB reviews require time, students should submit a complete application <u>at least one month</u> before they plan to start data collection, to allow for enough time for the review's completion. Any questions about FSU's OHSP and IRB resources and requirements can be directed to the OHSP at humansubjects@fsu.edu or (850) 644-7900.

So how does a student know if their proposed research requires OHSP and/or IRB review? At least one semester before beginning the HITM thesis project, students should use the following resources and talk with their thesis director to help determine next steps.

- **Worksheet: Human Research:** The OHSP uses a worksheet for individuals to help determine whether an activity is considered Human Research. Students should consult the worksheet as a guide and discuss it with their thesis director. The worksheet can be located in RAMP, FSU's research application management system. To access RAMP, go into the MyFSU portal. In RAMP, under the IRB tab, click on Library. Within the Library click on Worksheet, the HRP-310-Worksheet-Human Research Determination document. After reviewing the worksheet to get a sense of whether and how your activity may involve human research, submit an Official Request for Determination of Not Human Research to OHSP (see directions on the form). For other information, check out OHSP's Investigator Manual.

- **CITI Training**: The Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Human Subjects Research (HSR) training provides key instruction for protecting human subjects in proposed research. Certification is good for three years, and students who might continue their engagement with human subject research should complete this training. Further information can be found at: https://www.research.fsu.edu/research-offices/ohsp/investigator-resources/citi-training-requirements/

- **"Protocol Development Workshop" webinar:** if a student in consultation with their thesis director has determined that yes, their proposed research will require OHSP and/or IRB review, they should review this Protocol Writing Workshop to better

understand what is expected in their application:
https://www.research.fsu.edu/research-offices/ohsp/investigator-resources/training-education/protocol-writing-workshop/

Responsibilities of the Honors in the Major Student

The HITM student is ultimately responsible for conceptualizing and developing the project and for completing the project within the prescribed two-semester schedule.

Responsibilities of the student include, but are not limited to, the following:
- The student is responsible for speaking with their major's honors liaison and networking with faculty within their major to locate a thesis director.
- The student is responsible for choosing their topic or subject matter based upon their major and interests and ideally based upon their identification of a gap in academic, professional, or artistic knowledge.
- The student is responsible for identifying and recruiting two or three faculty committee members, one of whom must have a home academic department different from that of the thesis director.
- The student is responsible for independently constructing a research or project design appropriate for their major and their topic, with support of their thesis director.
- If applicable, the student is responsible for taking steps necessary to secure OHSP or IRB approvals for data collection, for selecting proper instruments if appropriate, and for conducting the data collection itself.
- The student Is responsible for analyzing the data or assessing the outcomes. If appropriate, the student may need to work with their thesis director or relevant resources to learn how to use analytical tools or software.
- The student is responsible for interpreting the data and identifying findings, conclusions, and recommended next steps.
- The student is responsible for securing signatures on Honors in the Major paperwork and submitting signed paperwork by the deadlines each semester.
- The student is responsible for registering for the appropriate 4000-level thesis course each semester they are in the HITM program.
- The student is responsible for scheduling the oral defense, including scheduling a space for the event and finding a time that works for all committee members.
- The student is responsible for submitting their final HITM thesis project to the DigiNole archive by the last day of the semester in which they defend their project.

Responsibilities of the Thesis Director and Supervisory Committee

Honors in the Major thesis project work is carried out by the student over a period of two or three semesters in collaboration with a directing professor (the HITM committee chair, also known as the thesis director) and members of the student's HITM committee. In addition to the director, the committee must include at least one other faculty member from within the student's major department or area, and a third faculty member from outside of the major department or area. One other faculty member from any department or area may also serve.

Most often, the thesis director and members of the supervisory committee are tenured or tenure-track faculty members. However, Specialized Faculty and other permanent instructional and research staff are eligible to serve as a member of a supervisory committee so long as they have a terminal degree in the field of study (a Ph.D. for most academic programs) or have graduate faculty status. Otherwise, the Director of Honors will review the instructor's CV and, if their professional expertise and experience is deemed central to the student's thesis work, they may serve as co-director with one other committee member who is either in a tenured or tenure-earning position, who has graduate faculty status, or who has a terminal research degree in a relevant field.

In units where there are no tenured or tenure-track faculty, the committee may be comprised entirely of specialized faculty so long as the committee chair meets the standards above (terminal degree or graduate faculty status) and, whenever possible, at least one of the other two required members is in a tenure-track or tenured position. Consistent with policy in the *Graduate Handbook*, each committee member's CV should show evidence of research-based scholarship and/or creative work resulting in peer-reviewed publications or equivalent work.

A scholar who is not an employee of FSU may serve as a member of the supervisory committee if they are classified as a "visiting scholar" or have a courtesy faculty appointment at FSU. If a student wishes to include such a fourth committee member, they must first secure the approval of the Director of the University Honors Program. Scholars without these FSU affiliation classifications may not serve on the committee, although a student could still unofficially consult with them, with the approval of their thesis director.

A supervisory committee consisting entirely of tenure or tenure-track faculty members does not require approval by the Director of the University Honors Program. Academic departments and programs may elect to have more specific criteria for the thesis director and supervisory committee.

The responsibilities of the thesis director include:

- Directing the student's research, study, and writing
- Helping the student structure the basic conception of the thesis project
- Helping the student clarify the objects of the thesis project
- Working with the student to discover an appropriate research or creative strategy for achieving these objectives
- Monitoring the progress of the student
- Providing specific guidance to the student regarding formal deadline
- Helping the student schedule the defense
- Signing the forms required by the University Office
- Serving as instructor of record for the HITM course credit

The responsibilities of the other members of the supervisory committee include:
- Providing additional viewpoints on all phases of the thesis project – conception, creation, and completion
- Contributing input on the project itself and the evaluation of the project
- Participating in the oral defense

The Thesis Director as Mentor, the Student as Mentee

The Honors in the Major thesis project represents a critical part of the student's transformation from knowledge *consumer* to knowledge *producer*. As such, the thesis director must recognize that an HITM student has unique needs distinct from those of other undergraduate students and of graduate students. In other words, the HITM student is more advanced than many of their undergraduate peers, but they most likely will not necessarily have the specialized training, knowledge, or skills that faculty can expect of a graduate student. Moreover, HITM students may struggle with the highly creative conceptual work of constructing a sound and original project design.

The thesis director will need to take an active and enthusiastic role in fostering the student's growth. This will include recurring face-to-face meetings with the student to determine what feedback, guidance, training, and resources may be necessary at each stage of the HITM thesis project. The HITM Outcomes Rubrics are available at the end of this handbook. They are optional tools and can be used in meetings to discuss with a student their understanding of where they are at and where they should be (see Appendices A – C). In other words, the thesis director can use the appropriate rubrics as a mentoring tool to discuss the student's work and performance. The use of the rubrics is not required.

The HITM student, in turn, should plan on coming to those meetings with a summary of what they are currently working on, with a description of what aspects of their project they believe are going well versus aspects they are struggling with, questions, and plans for continued work until the next face-to-face meeting. The student should self-reflect in preparation for these meetings and not be afraid to state their needs, in an effort to explore with the thesis director what steps could be taken and what resources utilized to meet those needs.

Ultimately, regular face-to-face communication about the process and labor of knowledge production is integral to the enthusiastic and effective mentoring of the HITM student. The purpose of recurring meetings is not to hand hold or spoon feed the HITM student, but rather to provide active opportunities to check in on the status of their work and their growth as an up-and-coming researcher and professional in the field.

Honors in the Major Awards and Funding Opportunities

In planning out potential expenses for their HITM thesis project during their Application Semester, students should seek out and apply to funding opportunities at FSU. Discussing potential expenses and identifying funding opportunities in their college, department, or program during the Application Semester will help streamline their HITM experience, while providing good practice for the professional practice of funding application.

Some awards and funding opportunities listed on the Honors Program's Honors in the Major [Funding and Awards](#) web page include:

- Students who may require funding for their HITM thesis project to cover expenses such as travel, equipment and materials, or reimbursement of survey participants, may apply for the **Thesis Funding Award**.

- Students can nominate their thesis director to be considered for the **Thesis Mentor Award**. This award is offered annually to recognize and honor faculty members whose direction and advisement of HITM thesis project research or creative activity has significantly contributed to the enhancement and quality of education of undergraduate students at FSU.

- Faculty may nominate students for the **Kingsbury Undergraduate Writing Award**, which is offered annually to a student who demonstrates excellence in the writing of an undergraduate Honors thesis project. Students are nominated by a faculty member, traditionally by a thesis director or a member of the supervisory committee. Students nominated must submit a draft of their HITM thesis project to be considered for the award.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I find a thesis director? How do I find committee members?

- Students should consider what major requirement classes they have most enjoyed and what previous research collaborations they may have had with faculty members to consider thesis director options. Going to office hours to talk with potential thesis directors is a good way to share your interest and explore whether they might have interest in mentoring you. If you need additional guidance, speak with your major's honors liaison.

  Once a thesis director has been identified, you should talk with them about committee member possibilities. Since one committee member must come from outside of your major department or area, this is an excellent opportunity to include someone whose classes, research, and/or creative work have inspired you.

Can I have a committee member who is outside of FSU?

- A scholar who is not an employee of FSU may serve as a member of the supervisory committee if they are classified as a "visiting scholar" or have a courtesy faculty appointment at FSU. If a student wishes to include such a fourth committee member, they must first secure the approval of the Director of the University Honors Program. Scholars without these FSU affiliation classifications may not serve on the committee, although a student could still unofficially consult with them, with the approval of their thesis director.

What types of HITM thesis projects are suitable for my major?

- Talk about HITM thesis project ideas and possibilities with your thesis director. To help brainstorm ideas, you are encouraged to review previous HITM thesis projects from your major in the [DigiNole](#) archive. Another option is to locate a top academic journal in your field (talk with a librarian if you aren't sure how to do this) and look through issues from the last one to two years. What jumps out at you as familiar or intriguing? Finding current peer-reviewed publications that stand out to you, and looking through their findings and conclusions to see what the authors identify as gaps in knowledge, is good way to consider possibilities. Wherever your ideas come from, talk with your thesis director to identify your next steps.

How long does my HITM thesis need to be? Is there a word count? How many references do I need to cite?

- Every discipline or field has different conventions regarding sufficient page length and number of citations. Your thesis director will speak to conventions of your field and what's appropriate for the HITM thesis project. For creative HITM thesis projects whose main outcome is visual art, a performance, or some other creative output other than written scholarship, note that the written portion must be a minimum 10 pages of text. See page 4 of this handbook for more information.

Are there examples of completed HITM projects I can look at?

- Yes. The [DigiNole](#) archive has HITM thesis projects from previous years that you can explore.

Why do I have to defend my HITM thesis in front of a committee?

- Presentation of the results of your work to your supervisory committee, and responding to their questions during the oral defense, allows you to

showcase your accomplishments. It is a great opportunity to practice talking about your work and to have a productive conversation with faculty about where to take your project and what comes next.

I have decided to extend my HITM thesis into a third semester. What do I need to do?

- Remember that all HITM thesis projects must be complete before you graduate. If you have at least three semesters left before you graduate, you will first need to consult with your thesis director to ensure they support this plan and agree that it is necessary. Ideally, you will have this conversation sometime before the end of your Prospectus Semester. Once your thesis director approves your plan, you will need to continue to register for HITM thesis credits in the second semester, but no paperwork needs to be submitted during the second semester of a three-semester HITM project. You will resume the Defense Semester paperwork in your third semester of the HITM project. *Note: many HITM thesis credit courses offered by colleges, departments, and programs are repeatable for up to 9 credit hours only. Make sure that if you register for thesis credits during the Summer semester, the Summer semester is part of your three-semester completion plan.

Can I complete my HITM thesis in one semester if I take 6 thesis credits all at once?

- No. University policy requires that students spend two to three semesters completing the HITM thesis project. In addition, high quality original projects of sufficient depth require longer than one semester to develop and complete.

Can I change my thesis director and/or a committee member after one semester?

- Unless your thesis director or committee member decide not to continue their involvement, or unforeseen difficulties make it imperative for you to find a different thesis director or committee member, it is not advisable to make such a change. First, the thesis director and supervisory committee and you have already committed to the project and put much work into it.

And second, your potential new thesis director may not feel comfortable supervising your HITM thesis project when another faculty member has already guided you through work on the project. Should you find yourself in a position where you are thinking about making a change, talk with your major's [honors liaison](#) for guidance.

Does my research need to be reviewed by the IRB?

- Possibly, depending on your proposed research's interaction or intervention with human subjects. Review the IRB resources on pages 8 and 9 of this handbook, and discuss with your thesis director whether an IRB review is necessary.

Is my completion of Honors in the Major noted on my diploma and transcript?

- Completion of the HITM program is recognized by the distinction of graduating "With Honors," as designated on the transcript. HITM recognition is not noted on the diploma.

May I invite my family and friends to my oral defense?

- Yes! Many students will invite loved ones to their oral defense to observe their presentation and to celebrate their achievement. Talk with your thesis director about the possibility of inviting family and friends.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Analytical HITM Thesis Outcomes Rubrics

HITM Thesis Outcome Rubrics are optional tools for students and faculty to use to discuss thesis performance over the course of the HITM experience. Whether they are used is up to each thesis director.

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1. Inquiry and Analysis

Inquiry is the systemic process of exploring issues, objects or works through the collection and analysis of evidence that results in informed conclusions or judgments. Analysis is the process of breaking complex topics or issues into parts to gain a better understanding of them.

	Distinguished 4	Proficient 3	Basic 2	Non-Performing 1
Topic Selection	Identifies a creative, focused, and manageable topic that addresses potentially significant yet previously less-explored aspects of the topic.	Identifies a focused and manageable/doable topic that appropriately addresses relevant aspects of the topic.	Identifies a topic that while manageable/doable, is too narrowly focused and leaves out relevant aspects of the topic.	Identifies a topic that is far too general and wide-ranging as to be manageable and doable.
Existing Knowledge, Research, and/or Views	Synthesizes in-depth information from relevant sources representing various points of view/approaches.	Presents in-depth information from relevant sources representing various points of view/approaches.	Presents information from relevant sources representing limited points of view/approaches.	Presents information from irrelevant sources representing limited points of view/approaches.
Design Process	All elements of the methodology or theoretical framework are skillfully developed. Appropriate methodology or theoretical frameworks may be synthesized from across disciplines or from relevant sub-disciplines.	Critical elements of the methodology or theoretical framework are appropriately developed. However, more subtle elements are ignored or unaccounted for.	Critical elements of the methodology or theoretical framework are missing, incorrectly developed, or unfocused.	Inquiry design demonstrates a misunderstanding of the methodology or theoretical framework.
Analysis	Organizes and synthesizes evidence to reveal insightful patterns, differences, or similarities related to focus.	Organizes evidence to reveal important patterns, differences, or similarities.	Organizes evidence, but the organization is not effective in revealing important patterns, differences, or similarities.	Lists evidence, but it is not organized and/or is unrelated to focus.
Conclusions	States a conclusion that is logical extrapolation from the inquiry findings.	States a conclusion focused solely on the inquiry findings. The conclusion arises specifically from and responds specifically to the inquiry findings.	States a general conclusion that, because it is so general, also applies beyond the scope of the inquiry findings.	States an ambiguous, illogical, or unsupportable conclusion from inquiry findings.
Limitations and Implications	Insightfully discusses in detail relevant and supported limitations and implications.	Discusses relevant and supported limitations and implications.	Presents relevant and supported limitations and implications.	Presents limitations and implications, but they are possibly irrelevant and unsupported.

FSU Honors – Analytical HITM Thesis Outcomes Rubrics

2. Information Literacy

The ability to know when there is a need for information, to be able to identify, locate, evaluate, and effectively and responsibly use and share that information for the problem at hand. – Adopted from the National Forum on Information Literacy

	Distinguished 4	Proficient 3	Basic 2	Non-Performing 1
Determine the Extent of Information Needed	Effectively defines the scope of the research questions or thesis. Effectively determines key concepts. Types of information (sources) selected directly relate to concepts or answer research question.	Defines the scope of the research question or thesis completely. Can determine key concepts. Types of information (sources) selected relate to concepts or answer research question.	Defines the scope of the research question or thesis incompletely (parts are missing, remains too broad or too narrow, etc.). Can determine key concepts. Types of information (sources) selected partially relate to concepts or answer research question.	Has difficulty defining the scope of the research question or thesis. Has difficulty determining key concepts. Types of information (sources) selected do not relate to concepts or answer research question.
Access the Needed Information	Accesses information using effective, well-designed search strategies and most appropriate information sources.	Accesses information using variety of search strategies and some relevant information sources. Demonstrates ability to refine search.	Accesses information using simple search strategies, retrieves information from limited and similar sources.	Accesses information randomly, retrieves information that lacks relevance and quality.
Evaluate Information and its Sources Critically	Chooses a variety of information sources appropriate to the scope and discipline of the research question. Selects sources after considering the importance (to the researched topic) of the multiple criteria used (such as relevance to the research question, currency, authority, audience, and bias or point of view).	Chooses a variety of information sources appropriate to the scope and discipline of the research question. Selects sources using multiple criteria (such as relevance to the research question, currency, and authority).	Chooses a variety of information sources. Selects sources using basic criteria (such as relevance to the research question and currency).	Chooses a few information sources. Selects sources using limited criteria (such as relevance to the research question).
Use Information Effectively to Accomplish a Specific Purpose	Communicates, organizes, and synthesizes information from sources to fully achieve a specific purpose, with clarity and depth.	Communicates, organizes, and synthesizes information from sources. Intended purpose is achieved.	Communicates and organizes information from sources. The information is not yet synthesized, so the intended purpose is not fully achieved.	Communicates information from sources. The information is fragmented and/or used inappropriately (misquoted, taken out of context, or incorrectly paraphrased, etc.), so the intended purpose is not achieved.
Access and Use Information Ethically and Legally	Students use correctly all of the following information use strategies (use of citations and references; choice of paraphrasing, summary, or quoting; using information in ways that are true to original context; distinguishing between common knowledge and ideas requiring attribution) and demonstrate a full understanding of the ethical and legal restrictions on the use of published, confidential, and/or proprietary information.	Students use correctly three of the following information use strategies (use of citations and references; choice of paraphrasing, summary, or quoting; using information in ways that are true to original context; distinguishing between common knowledge and ideas requiring attribution) and demonstrates a full understanding of the ethical and legal restrictions on the use of published, confidential, and/or proprietary information.	Students use correctly two of the following information use strategies (use of citations and references; choice of paraphrasing, summary, or quoting; using information in ways that are true to original context; distinguishing between common knowledge and ideas requiring attribution) and demonstrates a full understanding of the ethical and legal restrictions on the use of published, confidential, and/or proprietary information.	Students use correctly one of the following information use strategies (use of citations and references; choice of paraphrasing, summary, or quoting; using information in ways that are true to original context; distinguishing between common knowledge and ideas requiring attribution) and demonstrates a full understanding of the ethical and legal restrictions on the use of published, confidential, and/or proprietary information.

3. Problem Solving

Problem solving is the process of designing, evaluating, and implementing a strategy to answer an open-ended question or achieve a desired goal.

	Distinguished 4	Proficient 3	Basic 2	Non-Performing 1
Define Problem	Demonstrates the ability to construct a clear and insightful problem statement with evidence of all relevant contextual factors.	Demonstrates the ability to construct a problem statement with evidence of most relevant contextual factors, and problem statement is adequately detailed.	Begins to demonstrate the ability to construct a problem statement with evidence of most relevant contextual factors, but problem statement is superficial.	Demonstrates a limited ability in identifying a problem statement or related contextual factors.
Identify Strategies	Identifies multiple approaches for solving the problem that apply within a specific context.	Identifies multiple approaches for solving the problem, only some of which apply within a specific context.	Identifies only a single approach for solving the problem that does apply within a specific context.	Identifies one or more approaches for solving the problem that do not apply within a specific context.
Propose Solutions	Proposes one or more solutions that indicates a deep comprehension of the problem. Solution(s) are sensitive to contextual factors as well as all of the following: ethical, logical, and cultural dimensions of the problem.	Proposes one or more solutions that indicates comprehension of the problem. Solution(s) are sensitive to contextual factors as well as one of the following: ethical, logical, or cultural dimensions of the problem.	Proposes one solution that is "off the shelf" rather than individually designed to address the specific contextual factors of the problem.	Proposes a solution that is difficult to evaluate because it is vague or only directly addresses the problem statement.
Evaluate Potential Solutions	Evaluation of solutions is deep and elegant (for example, contains thorough and insightful explanation) and includes, deeply and thoroughly, all of the following: considers history of problem, reviews logic/reasoning, examines feasibility of solution, and weighs impact of solution.	Evaluation of solutions is adequate (for example, contains thorough explanation) and includes the following: considers history of problem, reviews logic/reasoning, examines feasibility of solution, and weighs impacts of solution.	Evaluation of solutions is brief (for example, explanation lacks depth) and includes the following: considers history of problem, reviews logic/reasoning, examines feasibility of solution, and weighs impacts of solution.	Evaluation of solutions is superficial (for example, contains cursory, surface level explanation) and includes the following: considers history of problem, reviews logic/reasoning, examines feasibility of solution, and weights impacts of solution.
Implement Solution	Implements the solution in a manner that addresses thoroughly and deeply multiple contextual factors of the problem.	Implements the solution in a manner that addresses multiple contextual factors of the problem in a surface manner.	Implements the solution in a manner that addresses the problem statement but ignores relevant contextual factors.	Implements the solution in a manner that does not directly address the problem statement.
Evaluate Outcomes	Reviews results relative to the problem defined with thorough, specific considerations of need for further work.	Reviews results relative to the problem defined with some consideration of need for further work.	Reviews results in terms of the problem defined with little, if any, consideration of need for further work.	Reviews results superficially in terms of the problem defined with no consideration of need for further work.

4. Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is a habit of mind characterized by the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion.

	Distinguished 4	Proficient 3	Basic 2	Non-Performing 1
Explanation of Issues	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated clearly and described comprehensively, delivering all relevant information necessary for full understanding.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated, described, and clarified so that understanding is not seriously impeded by omissions.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated but description leaves some terms undefined, ambiguities unexplored, boundaries undetermined, and/or backgrounds unknown.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated without clarification or description.
Evidence *Selecting and using information to investigate a point of view or conclusion*	Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are questioned thoroughly.	Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are subject to questioning.	Information is taken from source(s) with some interpretation/evaluation, but not enough to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are taken as mostly fact, with little questioning.	Information is taken from source(s) without any interpretation/evaluation. Viewpoints of experts are taken as fact, without question.
Influence of Context and Assumptions	Thoroughly (systematically and methodically) analyzes own and others' assumptions and carefully evaluates the relevance of contexts when presenting a position.	Identifies own and others' assumptions and several relevant contexts when presenting a position.	Questions some assumptions. Identifies several relevant contexts when presenting a position. May be more aware of others' assumptions than one's own (or vice versa).	Shows an emerging awareness of present assumptions (sometimes labels assertions as assumptions). Begins to identify some contexts when presenting a position.
Student's Position (Perspective, Thesis/Hypothesis)	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) is imaginative, taking into account the complexities of an issue. Limits of position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) are acknowledged. Others' points of view are synthesized within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis).	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) takes into account the complexities of an issue. Others' points of view are acknowledged within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis).	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) acknowledges different sides of an issue.	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) is stated, but is simplistic and obvious.
Conclusions and Related Outcomes (Implications and Consequences)	Conclusions and related outcomes (consequences and implications) are logical and reflect student's informed evaluation and ability to place evidence and perspectives discussed in priority order.	Conclusion is logically tied to a range of information, including opposing viewpoints; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly.	Conclusion is logically tied to information (because information is chosen to fit the desired conclusion); some related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly.	Conclusion is inconsistently tied to some of the information discussed; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are oversimplified.

5. Written Communication

Written communication is the development and expression of ideas in writing. Written communication involves learning to work in many genres and styles. It can involve working with many different writing technologies, and mixing texts, data, and images. Written communication abilities develop through iterative experiences across the curriculum.

	Distinguished 4	Proficient 3	Basic 2	Non-Performing 1
Context of and Purpose for Writing *Includes considerations of audience, purpose, and the circumstances surrounding the writing task(s).*	Demonstrates a thorough understanding of context, audience, and purpose that is responsive to the task(s) and focuses all elements of the work.	Demonstrates adequate consideration of context, audience, and purpose and a clear focus on the task(s) (e.g., the task aligns with audience, purpose, and context).	Demonstrates awareness of context, audience, purpose, and to the task(s) (e.g., begins to show awareness of audience's perceptions and assumptions).	Demonstrates minimal attention to context, audience, purpose, and to the task(s). (e.g., expectation of thesis director or self as audience).
Content Development	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to illustrate mastery of the subject, conveying the writer's understanding, and shaping the whole work.	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to explore ideas within the context of the discipline and shape the whole work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop and explore ideas through most of the work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop simple ideas in some parts of the work.
Genre and Disciplinary Conventions	Demonstrates detailed attention to and successful execution of a wide range of conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s), including organization, content, presentation, formatting, and stylistic choices.	Demonstrates consistent use of important conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s), including organization, content, presentation, and stylistic choices.	Follows expectations appropriate to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s) for basic organization, content, and presentation.	Attempts to use a consistent system for basic organization and presentation.
Sources and Evidence	Demonstrates skillful use of high-quality, credible, relevant sources to develop ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates consistent use of credible, relevant sources to support ideas that are situated within the discipline and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates an attempt to use credible and/or relevant sources to support ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates an attempt to use sources to support ideas in the writing.
Control of Syntax and Mechanics	Uses graceful language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency, and is virtually error-free.	Uses straightforward language that generally conveys meaning to readers. The language used has few errors.	Uses language that generally conveys meaning to readers with clarity, although writing may include some errors.	Uses language that sometimes impedes meaning because of errors in usage.

Appendix B: Creative HITM Thesis Outcomes Rubrics

HITM Thesis Outcome Rubrics are optional tools for students and faculty to use to discuss thesis performance over the course of the HITM experience. Whether they are used is up to each thesis director.

FSU Honors – Creative HITM Thesis Outcomes Rubrics

1. Creative Thinking

Creative thinking is both the capacity to combine or synthesize existing ideas, images, or techniques in original ways and the experience of thinking, reacting, and working in an imaginative way characterized by a high degree of innovation, divergent thinking, and risk taking.

	Distinguished 4	Proficient 3	Basic 2	Non-Performing 1
Acquiring Competencies *This step refers to acquiring strategies and skills within a particular domain.*	Reflect: Evaluates creative process and product using domain-appropriate criteria.	Create: Creates an entirely new object, solution or idea that is appropriate to the domain.	Adapt: Successfully adapts an appropriate exemplar to their own specifications.	Model: Successfully reproduces an appropriate exemplar.
Taking Risks *May include personal risk (fear of embarrassment or rejection) or risk of failure in successfully completing assignment, i.e., going beyond original parameters of assignment, introducing new materials and forms, tackling controversial topics, advocating unpopular ideas or solutions.*	Actively seeks out and follows through on untested and potentially risky directions or approaches to the assignment in the final product.	Incorporates new directions or approaches to the assignment in the final product.	Considers new directions or approaches without going beyond the guidelines of the assignment.	Stays strictly within the guidelines of the assignment.
Solving Problems	Not only develops a logical, consistent plan to solve problem, but recognizes consequences of solution and can articulate reason for choosing solution.	Having selected from among alternatives, develops a logical, consistent plan to solve the problem.	Considers and rejects less acceptable approaches to solving problem.	Only a single approach is considered and is used to solve the problem.
Embracing Contradictions	Integrates alternate, divergent, or contradictory perspectives or ideas fully.	Incorporates alternate, divergent, or contradictory perspectives or ideas in an exploratory way.	Includes (recognizes the value of) alternate, divergent, or contradictory perspectives or ideas in a small way.	Acknowledges (mentions in passing) alternate, divergent, or contradictory perspectives or ideas.
Innovative Thinking *Novelty or uniqueness (of idea, claim, question, form, etc.)*	Extends a novel or unique idea, question, format, or product to create new knowledge or knowledge that crosses boundaries.	Creates a novel or unique idea, question, format, or product.	Experiments with creating a novel or unique idea, question, format, or product.	Reformulates a collection of available ideas.
Connecting, Synthesizing, Transforming	Transforms ideas or solutions into entirely new forms.	Synthesized ideas or solutions into a coherent whole.	Connects ideas or solutions in novel ways.	Recognizes existing connections among ideas or solutions.

2. Reading

Reading is "the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language" (Snow et al., 2002). (From www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB8024/index1.html)

	Distinguished 4	Proficient 3	Basic 2	Non-Performing 1
Comprehension	Recognizes possible implications of the text for contexts, perspectives, or issues beyond the assigned task within the classroom or beyond the author's explicit message (e.g., might recognize broader issues at play, or might pose challenges to the author's message and presentation).	Uses the text, general background knowledge, and/or specific knowledge of the author's context to draw more complex inferences about the author's message and attitude.	Evaluates how textual features (e.g., sentence and paragraph structure or tone) contribute to the author's message; draws basic inferences about context and purpose of text.	Apprehends vocabulary appropriately to paraphrase or summarize the information the text communicates.
Genres	Uses ability to identify texts within and across genres, monitoring and adjusting reading strategies and expectations based on generic nuances of particular texts.	Articulates distinctions among genres and their characteristic conventions.	Reflects on reading experiences across a variety of genres, reading both with and against the grain experimentally and intentionally.	Applies tacit genre knowledge to a variety of classroom reading assignments in productive, if unreflective, ways.
Relationship to Text *Making meanings with texts in their contexts*	Evaluates texts for scholarly significance and relevance within and across the various disciplines, evaluating them according to their contributions and consequences.	Uses texts in the context of scholarship to develop a foundation of disciplinary knowledge and to raise and explore important questions.	Engages texts with the intention and expectation of building topical and world knowledge.	Approaches texts in the context of assignments with the intention and expectation of finding right answers and learning facts and concepts to display for credit.
Analysis *Interacting with texts in parts and as wholes*	Evaluates strategies for relating ideas, text structure, or other textual features in order to build knowledge or insight within and across texts and disciplines.	Identifies relations among ideas, text structure, or other textual features, to evaluate how they support an advanced understanding of the text as a whole.	Recognizes relations among parts or aspects of a text, such as effective or ineffective arguments or literary features, in considering how these contribute to a basic understanding of the text as a whole.	Identifies aspects of a text (e.g., content, structure, or relations among ideas) as needed to respond to questions posed in assigned tasks.
Interpretation *Making sense with texts as blueprints for meaning*	Provides evidence not only that they can read by using appropriate epistemological lens but that they can also engage in reading as part of a continuing dialogue within and beyond a discipline or a community of readers	Articulates an understanding of the multiple ways of reading and the range of interpretive strategies particular to one's discipline(s) or in a given community of readers.	Demonstrates that they can read purposefully, choosing among interpretive strategies depending on the purpose of the reading.	Can identify purpose(s) for reading, relying on an external authority such as an instructor for clarification of the task.
Reader's Voice *Participating in academic discourse about texts*	Discusses texts with an independent intellectual and ethical disposition so as to further or maintain disciplinary conversations.	Elaborates on the texts (through interpretation or questioning) so as to deepen or enhance an ongoing discussion.	Discusses texts in structured conversations (such as in a classroom) in ways that contribute to a basic, shared understanding of the text.	Comments about texts in ways that preserve the author's meanings and link them to the assignment.

FSU Honors – Creative HITM Thesis Outcomes Rubrics

3. Integrative Learning

Integrative learning is an understanding and a disposition that a student builds across the curriculum and co-curriculum, from making simple connections among ideas and experiences to synthesizing and transferring learning to new, complex situations within and beyond the campus.

	Distinguished 4	Proficient 3	Basic 2	Non-Performing 1
Connections to Experience *Connects relevant experience, academic knowledge, and creative inquiry*	Meaningfully *synthesizes* connections among experiences outside of the formal classroom or the studio (including life experiences and academic experiences) to *deepen understanding* of fields of creative inquiry and to broaden own points of view.	Effectively *selects and develops* examples of life experiences, drawn from a variety of contexts (e.g., family life, artistic participation, work experience, civic involvement) to *illuminate* concepts/theories/ frameworks of fields of creative inquiry.	*Compares* life experiences and academic knowledge to infer differences, as well as similarities, and *acknowledge perspectives* other than own.	*Identifies* connections between life experiences and those academic texts and artistic works *perceived as similar and related* to own interests.
Connections to Creative Field *Sees (makes) connections across creative fields, perspectives*	Independently creates wholes out of multiple parts (synthesizes) or draws conclusions by combining examples, influences, or theories from more than one field of creative inquiry or perspective.	Independently connects examples, influences, or theories from more than one field of creative inquiry or perspective.	When prompted, connects examples, influences, or theories from more than one field of creative inquiry or perspective.	When prompted, presents examples, influences, or theories from more than one field of creative inquiry or perspective.
Transfer *Adapts and applies skills, abilities, theories, or techniques gained in one situation to new situations*	Adapts and applies skills, abilities, theories, or techniques gained in one situation to new situations *to solve difficult problems or explore complex issues in original ways*.	Adapts and applies skills, abilities, theories, or techniques gained in one situation to new situations *to solve problems or explore issues*.	Uses skills, abilities, theories, or techniques, gained in one situation in a new situation *to contribute to understanding of problem or issues*.	Uses, in a basic way, skills, abilities, theories, or techniques gained in one situation *in a new situation*.
Integrated Communication	Fulfills the HITM project by choosing a form, language, or visual medium *in ways that enhance meaning*, making clear the interdependence of language and meaning, thought, and expression.	Fulfills the HITM project by choosing a format, language, or visual medium *to explicitly connect content and form*, demonstrating awareness of purpose and audience.	Fulfills the HITM project by choosing a format, language, or visual medium that *connects in a basic way* what is being communicated (content) with how it is said (form).	Fulfills the HITM project in a rudimentary but disjointed or confused form.
Reflection and Self-Assessment *Demonstrates a developing sense of self as a learner, building no prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts*	Envisions a future self (and possibly makes plans that build on past experiences) that have occurred across multiple and diverse contexts.	Evaluates changes in own learning over time, recognizing complex contextual factors (e.g., work with ambiguity and risk, deals with frustration, considers ethical frameworks).	Articulates strengths and challenges (within specific performances or events) to increase effectiveness in different contexts (through increased self-awareness).	Describes own performances with general descriptors of success and failure.

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4. Oral and Performative Communication

Oral communication is a prepared, purposeful presentation designed to increase knowledge, to foster understanding, or to promote change in the listeners' attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors. Performative communication expresses a creative work to an audience in a performance.

	Distinguished 4	Proficient 3	Basic 2	Non-Performing 1
Organization	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is clearly and consistently observable and is skillful and makes the content of the presentation cohesive.	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is clearly and consistently observable within the presentation.	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is intermittently observable within the presentation.	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is not observable within the presentation.
Language	Language choices are imaginative, memorable, and compelling, and enhance the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience.	Language choices are thoughtful and generally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience.	Language choices are mundane and commonplace and partially support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience.	Language choices are unclear and minimally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is not appropriate to audience.
Delivery	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation compelling, and speaker appears polished and confident.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation interesting, and speaker appears comfortable.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation understandable, and speaker appears tentative.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) detract from the understandability of the presentation, and speaker appears uncomfortable.
Supporting Material	A variety of types of supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that significantly supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/ authority on the topic.	Supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that generally supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that partially supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Insufficient supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make reference to information or analysis that minimally supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.
Central Message	Central message is compelling (precisely stated, appropriately repeated, memorable, and strongly supported).	Central message is clear and consistent with the supporting material.	Central message is basically understandable but is not often repeated and is not memorable.	Central message can be deduced, but is not explicitly stated in the presentation.

Appendix C: Applied/Experiential HITM Thesis Outcomes Rubrics

HITM Thesis Outcome Rubrics are optional tools for students and faculty to use to discuss thesis performance over the course of the HITM experience. Whether they are used is up to each thesis director.

1. Professional Engagement

Professional engagement encompasses actions wherein individuals participate, independently or on teams, within or across public or private organizations for experiential learning and collaborative opportunities as emerging practitioners.

	Distinguished 4	Proficient 3	Basic 2	Non-Performing 1
Diversity of Communities and Cultures	Demonstrates evidence of adjustment in own attitudes and beliefs because of working within and learning from diversity of communities and cultures. Promotes others' engagement with diversity.	Reflects on how own attitudes and beliefs are different from those of other cultures and communities. Exhibits curiosity about what can be learned from diversity of communities and cultures.	Has awareness that own attitudes and beliefs are different from those of other cultures and communities. Exhibits little curiosity about what can be learned from diversity of communities and cultures.	Expresses attitudes and beliefs as an individual, from a one-sided view. Is indifferent or resistant to what can be learned from diversity of communities and cultures.
Analysis of Knowledge	Connects and extends knowledge (facts, theories, etc.) from one's own academic field to the professional context of their experiential HITM project.	Analyzes knowledge (facts, theories, etc.) from one's own academic field making relevant connections to the professional context of their experiential HITM project.	Begins to connect knowledge (facts, theories, etc.) from one's own academic field to professional context of their experiential HITM project.	Begins to identify knowledge (facts, theories, etc.) from one's own academic field to professional context of their experiential HITM project.
Professional Identity and Commitment	Provides evidence of experience in professional activities and describes what they have learned about themselves as it relates to a reinforced and clarified sense of their professional identity as a practitioner.	Provides evidence of experience in professional activities and describes what they have learned about themselves as it relates to a growing sense of professional identity as a practitioner.	Evidence suggests involvement in professional activities is generated from expectations or course requirements rather than from a sense of professional competency and identity.	Provides little evidence of their experience in professional activities and does not connect experiences to a professional identity as a practitioner.
Professional Communication	Tailors communication strategies to effectively express, listen, and adapt to others to establish relationships to further organizational goals.	Effectively communicates in professional context, showing ability to do all of the following: express, listen, and adapt ideas and messages based on others' perspectives.	Communicates in professional context, showing ability to do more than one of the following: express, listen, and adapt ideas and messages based on others' perspectives.	Communicates in professional context, showing ability to do one of the following: express, listen, or adapt ideas and messages based on others' perspectives.
Professional Action and Reflection	Demonstrates independent experience and *shows initiative in team leadership* of complex or multiple professional activities, accompanied by reflective insights or analysis about the aims and accomplishments of one's actions.	Demonstrates independent experience and *team leadership* of professional action, with reflective insights or analysis about the aims and accomplishments of one's actions.	Has clearly *participated* in professionally focused actions and begins to reflect or describe how those actions may benefit the organization and professional field.	Has *experimented* with some professional activities but shows little internalized understanding of their aims or effects and little commitment to future action.
Professional Contexts/Structures	Demonstrates ability and commitment to *collaboratively work across and within* organizational contexts and structures *to achieve a professional aim*	Demonstrates ability and commitment to work actively *within* organizational contexts and structures *to achieve a professional aim*.	Demonstrates experience identifying intentional ways to *participate in* professional contexts and structures.	Experiments with professional context and structures, *tries out a few to see what fits*.

2. Problem Solving

Problem solving is the process of designing, evaluating, and implementing a strategy to answer an open-ended question or achieve a desired goal.

	Distinguished 4	Proficient 3	Basic 2	Non-Performing 1
Define Problem	Demonstrates the ability to construct a clear and insightful problem statement with evidence of all relevant contextual factors.	Demonstrates the ability to construct a problem statement with evidence of most relevant contextual factors, and problem statement is adequately detailed.	Begins to demonstrate the ability to construct a problem statement with evidence of most relevant contextual factors, but problem statement is superficial.	Demonstrates a limited ability in identifying a problem statement or related contextual factors.
Identify Strategies	Identifies multiple approaches for solving the problem that apply within a specific context.	Identifies multiple approaches for solving the problem, only some of which apply within a specific context.	Identifies only a single approach for solving the problem that does apply within a specific context.	Identifies one or more approaches for solving the problem that do not apply within a specific context.
Propose Solutions	Proposes one or more solutions that indicates a deep comprehension of the problem. Solution(s) are sensitive to contextual factors as well as all of the following: ethical, logical, and cultural dimensions of the problem.	Proposes one or more solutions that indicates comprehension of the problem. Solution(s) are sensitive to contextual factors as well as one of the following: ethical, logical, or cultural dimensions of the problem.	Proposes one solution that is "off the shelf" rather than individually designed to address the specific contextual factors of the problem.	Proposes a solution that is difficult to evaluate because it is vague or only directly addresses the problem statement.
Evaluate Potential Solutions	Evaluation of solutions is deep and elegant (for example, contains thorough and insightful explanation) and includes, deeply and thoroughly, all of the following: considers history of problem, reviews logic/reasoning, examines feasibility of solution, and weighs impact of solution.	Evaluation of solutions is adequate (for example, contains thorough explanation) and includes the following: considers history of problem, reviews logic/reasoning, examines feasibility of solution, and weighs impacts of solution.	Evaluation of solutions is brief (for example, explanation lacks depth) and includes the following: considers history of problem, reviews logic/reasoning, examines feasibility of solution, and weighs impacts of solution.	Evaluation of solutions is superficial (for example, contains cursory, surface level explanation) and includes the following: considers history of problem, reviews logic/reasoning, examines feasibility of solution, and weights impacts of solution.
Implement Solution	Implements the solution in a manner that addresses thoroughly and deeply multiple contextual factors of the problem.	Implements the solution in a manner that addresses multiple contextual factors of the problem in a surface manner.	Implements the solution in a manner that addresses the problem statement but ignores relevant contextual factors.	Implements the solution in a manner that does not directly address the problem statement.
Evaluate Outcomes	Reviews results relative to the problem defined with thorough, specific considerations of need for further work.	Reviews results relative to the problem defined with some consideration of need for further work.	Reviews results in terms of the problem defined with little, if any, consideration of need for further work.	Reviews results superficially in terms of the problem defined with no consideration of need for further work.

FSU Honors – Applied/Experiential HITM Thesis Outcomes Rubrics

3. Teamwork

Teamwork is behaviors under the control of individual team members (effort they put into team tasks, their manner of interacting with others on team, and the quantity and quality of contributions they make to team discussions.)

	Distinguished 4	Proficient 3	Basic 2	Non-Performing 1
Contributes to Team Meetings	Helps the team move forward by articulating the merits of alternative ideas or proposals.	Offers alternative solutions or courses of action that build on the ideas of others.	Offers new suggestions to advance the work of the group.	Shares ideas but does not advance the work of the group.
Facilitates the Contributions of Team Members	Engages team members in ways that facilitate their contributions to meetings by both constructively building upon or synthesizing the contributions of others as well as noticing when someone is not participating and inviting them to engage.	Engages team members in ways that facilitate their contributions to meetings by constructively building upon or synthesizing the contributions of others.	Engages team members in ways that facilitate their contributions to meetings by restating the views of other team members and/or asking questions for clarification.	Engages team members by taking turns and listening to others without interrupting.
Individual Contributions Outside of Team Meetings	Completes all assigned tasks by deadline; work accomplished is thorough, comprehensive, and advances the project. Proactively helps other team members complete their assigned tasks to a similar level of excellence.	Completes all assigned tasks by deadline; work accomplished is thorough, comprehensive, and advances the project.	Completes all assigned tasks by deadline; work accomplished advances the project.	Completes all assigned tasks by deadline.
Fosters Constructive Team Climate	Supports a constructive team climate by doing all of the following: ● Treats team members respectfully by being polite and constructive in communication. ● Uses positive vocal or written tone, facial expressions, and/or body language to convey a positive attitude about the team and its work. ● Motivates teammates by expressing confidence about the importance of the task and the team's ability to accomplish it. ● Provides assistance and/or encouragement to team members.	Supports a constructive team climate by doing any three of the following: ● Treats team members respectfully by being polite and constructive in communication. ● Uses positive vocal or written tone, facial expressions, and/or body language to convey a positive attitude about the team and its work. ● Motivates teammates by expressing confidence about the importance of the task and the team's ability to accomplish it. ● Provides assistance and/or encouragement to team members.	Supports a constructive team climate by doing any two of the following: ● Treats team members respectfully by being polite and constructive in communication. ● Uses positive vocal or written tone, facial expressions, and/or body language to convey a positive attitude about the team and its work. ● Motivates teammates by expressing confidence about the importance of the task and the team's ability to accomplish it. ● Provides assistance and/or encouragement to team members.	Supports a constructive team climate by doing one of the following: ● Treats team members respectfully by being polite and constructive in communication. ● Uses positive vocal or written tone, facial expressions, and/or body language to convey a positive attitude about the team and its work. ● Motivates teammates by expressing confidence about the importance of the task and the team's ability to accomplish it. ● Provides assistance and/or encouragement to team members.
Responds to Conflict	Addresses destructive conflict directly and constructively, helping to manage/resolve it in a way that strengthens overall team cohesiveness and future effectiveness.	Identifies and acknowledges conflict and stays engaged with it.	Redirecting focus toward common ground, toward task at hand (away from conflict).	Passively accepts alternate viewpoints/ideas/opinions.

FSU Honors – Applied/Experiential HITM Thesis Outcomes Rubrics

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4. Integrative Learning

Integrative learning is an understanding and a disposition that a student builds across the curriculum and co-curriculum, from making simple connections among ideas and experiences to synthesizing and transferring learning to new, complex situations within and beyond the campus.

	Distinguished 4	Proficient 3	Basic 2	Non-Performing 1
Connections to Experience *Connects relevant experience and academic knowledge*	Meaningfully *synthesizes* connections among experiences outside of the formal classroom (including life experiences and academic experiences such as action research) to *deepen understanding* of fields of study and to broaden own points of view.	Effectively *selects and develops* examples of life experiences, drawn from a variety of contexts (e.g., family life, artistic participation, work experience, civic involvement) to *illuminate* concepts/theories/ frameworks of fields of study.	*Compares* life experiences and academic knowledge to infer differences, as well as similarities, and *acknowledge perspectives* other than own.	*Identifies* connections between life experiences and those academic texts and ideas *perceived as similar and related* to own interests.
Connections to Discipline *Sees (makes) connections across disciplines, perspectives*	Independently or with a team, creates wholes out of multiple parts (synthesizes) or draws conclusions by combining examples, facts, or theories from more than one field of study or perspective.	Independently or with a team, connects examples, facts, or theories from more than one field of study or perspective.	When prompted, connects examples, facts, or theories from more than one field of study or perspective.	When prompted, presents examples, facts, or theories from more than one field of study or perspective.
Transfer *Adapts and applies skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation to new situations*	Adapts and applies, independently or with a team, skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation to new situations *to solve difficult problems or explore complex issues in original ways.*	Adapts and applies skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation to new situations *to solve problems or explore issues.*	Uses skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies, gained in one situation in a new situation *to contribute to understanding of problem or issues.*	Uses, in a basic way, skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation *in a new situation.*
Integrated Communication	Fulfills the HITM project by choosing a form, language, or graph *in ways that enhance meaning*, making clear the interdependence of language and meaning, thought, and expression.	Fulfills the HITM project by choosing a format, language, or graph *to explicitly connect content and form*, demonstrating awareness of purpose and audience.	Fulfills the HITM project by choosing a format, language, or graph that *connects in a basic way* what is being communicated (content) with how it is said (form).	Fulfills the HITM project in a rudimentary but disjointed or confused form.
Reflection and Self-Assessment *Demonstrates a developing sense of self as a learner, building no prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts*	Envisions a future self (and possibly makes plans that build on past experiences) that have occurred across multiple and diverse contexts.	Evaluates changes in own learning over time, recognizing complex contextual factors (e.g., work with ambiguity and risk, deals with frustration, considers ethical frameworks).	Articulates strengths and challenges (within specific performances or events) to increase effectiveness in different contexts (through increased self-awareness).	Describes own performances with general descriptors of success and failure.

5. Oral Communication

Oral communication is a prepared, purposeful presentation designed to increase knowledge, to foster understanding, or to promote change in the listeners' attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors.

	Distinguished 4	Proficient 3	Basic 2	Non-Performing 1
Organization	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is clearly and consistently observable and is skillful and makes the content of the presentation cohesive.	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is clearly and consistently observable within the presentation.	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is intermittently observable within the presentation.	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is not observable within the presentation.
Language	Language choices are imaginative, memorable, and compelling, and enhance the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience.	Language choices are thoughtful and generally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience.	Language choices are mundane and commonplace and partially support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience.	Language choices are unclear and minimally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is not appropriate to audience.
Delivery	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation compelling, and speaker appears polished and confident.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation interesting, and speaker appears comfortable.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation understandable, and speaker appears tentative.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) detract from the understandability of the presentation, and speaker appears uncomfortable.
Supporting Material	A variety of types of supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that significantly supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/ authority on the topic.	Supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that generally supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that partially supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Insufficient supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make reference to information or analysis that minimally supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.
Central Message	Central message is compelling (precisely stated, appropriately repeated, memorable, and strongly supported).	Central message is clear and consistent with the supporting material.	Central message is basically understandable but is not often repeated and is not memorable.	Central message can be deduced, but is not explicitly stated in the presentation.

6. Written Communication

Written communication is the development and expression of ideas in writing. Written communication involves learning to work in many genres and styles. It can involve working with many different writing technologies, and mixing texts, data, and images. Written communication abilities develop through iterative experiences across the curriculum.

	Distinguished 4	Proficient 3	Basic 2	Non-Performing 1
Context of and Purpose for Writing *Includes considerations of audience, purpose, and the circumstances surrounding the writing task(s).*	Demonstrates a thorough understanding of context, audience, and purpose that is responsive to the task(s) and focuses all elements of the work.	Demonstrates adequate consideration of context, audience, and purpose and a clear focus on the task(s) (e.g., the task aligns with audience, purpose, and context).	Demonstrates awareness of context, audience, purpose, and to the task(s) (e.g., begins to show awareness of audience's perceptions and assumptions).	Demonstrates minimal attention to context, audience, purpose, and to the task(s). (e.g., expectation of thesis director or self as audience).
Content Development	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to illustrate mastery of the subject, conveying the writer's understanding, and shaping the whole work.	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to explore ideas within the context of the discipline and shape the whole work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop and explore ideas through most of the work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop simple ideas in some parts of the work.
Genre and Disciplinary Conventions	Demonstrates detailed attention to and successful execution of a wide range of conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s), including organization, content, presentation, formatting, and stylistic choices.	Demonstrates consistent use of important conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s), including organization, content, presentation, and stylistic choices.	Follows expectations appropriate to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s) for basic organization, content, and presentation.	Attempts to use a consistent system for basic organization and presentation.
Sources and Evidence	Demonstrates skillful use of high-quality, credible, relevant sources to develop ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates consistent use of credible, relevant sources to support ideas that are situated within the discipline and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates an attempt to use credible and/or relevant sources to support ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates an attempt to use sources to support ideas in the writing.
Control of Syntax and Mechanics	Uses graceful language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency, and is virtually error-free.	Uses straightforward language that generally conveys meaning to readers. The language used has few errors.	Uses language that generally conveys meaning to readers with clarity, although writing may include some errors.	Uses language that sometimes impedes meaning because of errors in usage.

Appendix D: Things to Discuss with Your Thesis Director

THINGS TO DISCUSS WITH YOUR THESIS DIRECTOR

STARTING A PROJECT
- ☐ What is your research focus?
- ☐ Does your idea need to be scaled down or scaled up?
- ☐ What are the resources you'll need to get started?
- ☐ Will you need to get Human Subjects IRB certification?
- ☐ How many semesters will you need?
- ☐ Are they planning on being off-campus for any length of time during your project?

FIRST TERM/PROSPECTUS
- ☐ How often/how will you check in?
- ☐ Set up a timeline for sending paper drafts to thesis director and committee
- ☐ Make sure your thesis director has all the due dates on their calendar
- ☐ What do they expect from a prospectus?
- ☐ Will you need to defend your prospectus?
- ☐ Are there any sources they recommend you use?
- ☐ Do they have examples of past prospectuses?
- ☐ Who will serve on your faculty committee?
- ☐ How will they assign your grade for the semester?
- ☐ Are there any funding opportunities you might apply for?
- ☐ Do they know of opportunities to present or publish your work?

MIDDLE TERMS (optional)
- ☐ How often/how will you check in?
- ☐ What progress should you have made by the end of term?
- ☐ How will they assign your grade for the semester?

LAST TERM/DEFENSE
- ☐ How often/how will you check in?
- ☐ What/Where/When should your defense take place?
- ☐ Set up a timeline for sending drafts to committee members
- ☐ What do they expect from your final paper/project?
- ☐ Will your defense be open or closed? What should the format be?
- ☐ Who will reserve the space for your defense?
- ☐ Will you embargo your final thesis?
- ☐ Do you want your thesis to be viewable to everyone? Or just FSU campus?

If you or your director have questions, concerns, or confusion about HITM guidelines and policies, please feel free to contact us at HITM@fsu.edu

Appendix E: Writing a Prospectus

Writing a Prospectus

There are many different kinds of prospectuses for different purposes. In the humanities, Ph.D. students are asked to submit dissertation prospectuses to their committees; most research grant applications require them; academic job candidates often include short prospectuses with their application materials; and book publishers request them as part of the process of considering a manuscript for publication. Editors of journals and essay volumes may also request a prospectus of a proposed article. These different kinds of prospectuses differ mostly in regard to the length and detail with which the project is described. Dissertation prospectuses can run anywhere from 5 to 30 pages, depending on the amount of detail requested of the student, while grant and job applications generally require brevity (1-2 single-spaced pages for a job application; 3-5 single-spaced pages for many grants). It is highly likely that before a major humanities project is published, 3 or 4 different kinds of prospectuses will have been written for it.

A prospectus should answer the following questions:

1. What is the subject of the study? How is the subject defined (is there any special use of terminology or context)? What are the main research questions the study aims to answer?
2. Why is the author addressing this topic? What have other scholars written about this subject, and how is this author's approach, information, or perspective different? What need or gap does this proposed study fill in the scholarly conversation? What new approach to a familiar topic does it propose to offer? What will be the study's original and special contributions to this subject?
3. What are the main sources that will be used to explore this subject? Why are these sources appropriate?
4. What is the proposed organization of the study?
5. Does the author have any special needs in order to complete this study? In particular, does s/he need funding to travel to archives, gain access to collections, or acquire technical equipment? Does s/he have the special skills (languages, technical expertise) that this project might require?

Organization:

1. Title: it should be informative and helpful in pinpointing the topic and emphasis of your study
2. The body of the prospectus: this section should concentrate on addressing questions 1-3 above. The goal of this section is both to describe the project and to "sell" the reader on its potential interest and scholarly significance.
3. A chapter breakdown: This can either be a formal section, in which each chapter is described in turn in about a paragraph's worth of text, or it can be done more narratively, in which the whole project is outlined as a more seamless story. Either way, it should address question #4, above.
4. (for grant applications, if applicable) a brief paragraph at the end addressing question #5.
5. (for dissertation prospectuses) a bibliography is usually required.
6. (for book prospectuses) a table of contents is usually requested.

Some further considerations:

Think about your audience. Most of the members of your dissertation committee will know a lot about your area of research. But this may not be true, for example, of committee members from outside the department. It is even less likely that readers of job or grant applications or book editors will be familiar with the particular area of scholarship in which you work. It is therefore important that your prospectus convey its subject matter in as clear a fashion as possible, and that it not make too many demands upon its readers in regard to knowing specialized terminology or about debates within a given field. Your prospectus should be meaningful and interesting to an intelligent general reader.

What readers look for in a good prospectus. In most cases, prospectuses are being reviewed because people are considering entrusting you with something: the freedom of advancing to candidacy; a job; grant money; a book contract. They need to know if their trust will be well placed, and that you are a good bet to follow through on your proposed work. Questions that often arise in this regard are as follows:

- How interesting and important is this study? (will we have helped make an important contribution if we support this work?)
- Is the study feasible? Can it be done in a reasonable time frame?
- Can this author produce an excellent dissertation/book? (nobody wants to back a shoddy effort)

Your prospectus should address the first of these concerns head-on and show the reader exactly why your project is important, interesting, and, if possible, relevant to broad (human/social/political/cultural) concerns. The second two questions are a little tougher to address. Often, they emerge because the project appears to be too broad or ambitious in scope or not yet completely formulated. Or perhaps the readers have concerns about the author's scholarship. If you are concerned that your dissertation prospectus describes a project that appears too big to be successfully completed, you should discuss this with your dissertation director; this might be a signal that you need to reconsider your project's structure. As for the scholarship issue, you can best address this by making sure to show that you are completely in charge of the scholarly apparatus of your project: you know what you're talking about in regard to the scholarly debates, and you give sufficient (and the right) citations. (A negative example: if you say you're the first person to study a particular topic, you had better be right!)

Dissertations are works in progress. If you have read these suggestions in preparation for writing a dissertation prospectus, you may be feeling overwhelmed. Perhaps you worry that you don't know how to address all the issues raised in the five key questions outlined above. This is probably because your dissertation topic and/or organization has not been thoroughly worked out yet. Indeed, many students find it hard to be decisive about the shape, topic, and issues in a dissertation until they are well into the writing (which is why more advanced students tend to write better prospectuses than those just starting their research, and, not coincidentally, compete better for jobs and grants). If your dissertation is still in its early stages, you may have to bluff a little to produce a cogent prospectus, and even resign yourself to remaining a bit speculative in places about features of your project. But you should also see whatever difficulties you have in writing your prospectus as diagnostic of the work have yet to do in planning your dissertation: if you are having trouble articulating the topic, you probably need to think it through more thoroughly; if you are uncomfortable with your rationale for undertaking the project, perhaps you need to do more research on previous approaches; if you have trouble summarizing your chapters, perhaps you need to spend some time on either the organization of the dissertation or on the content of the

individual chapters. This exercise is worth the effort: a dissertation prospectus will probably be the first draft of all the other prospectuses to follow.

Source: http://users.clas.ufl.edu/shegeman/prospectusguide.htm

Appendix F: Research Prospectus Outline

Research Prospectus Outline

A research prospectus is a preliminary plan for conducting a study. This is not a detailed, technical research proposal, but, rather, a considered analysis of the issues you are likely to confront in such a study.   In essence, it is a *preliminary* proposal. In completing this task, you should be sure to consider at least the following:

Research Problem. What is the research problem you are trying to solve? [A problem is a situation that, left untreated, produces a negative consequence for some group, institution or individual(s). "Girls score lower on technology attitude scales than boys" isn't necessarily a problem; "girls are less inclined to pursue careers in technology-related fields" is.] What makes it a problem? For whom? Who says so?

Assumptions. On what assumptions are you basing your work? Which of them seem to be verifiable in the literature? Which are more speculative?

Theoretical Issues. What theoretical issues arise in your proposed study? For example, "theoretically," how would you explain this problem and the results you suspect you might get to another scholar? (Do you take a behavioral view? Social systems view?) Are there other theoretical orientations that should be considered in the design of your study?

Literature Review. What, in general, does the literature say about your topic? [This need not be a complete review, but you should cite some of the major theory, research and writers in the field.]

Research Questions. Based on your problem, what are the research questions you are trying to answer? Why and how will answering these questions contribute to solving the research problem? Remember…a research question can be answered ONLY with data or information.

General Research Plan. In general, how would you propose to conduct this research study so that it answers your research questions? What kind of data will you gather (specify type, such as surveys, observations, interviews…or some combination of these types)? From whom will you gather it? Why them?   How will you reduce the data - make sense of it? How will you assure that the data are of high quality?

Anticipated Difficulties and Pitfalls. What kind of difficulties and pitfalls might you expect in doing a study of this type? What will you do to prevent them or minimize their effects?

Anticipated Benefits. Who will benefit from the fact that this research is undertaken? How? Why? Who might be disturbed this proposed study? How? Why?

This should be a thoughtful, reflective paper that presents a balanced view of the proposed study - both its problems and its opportunities. It should serve as a first, solid communication with your committee about the kind of thinking you have been doing on an anticipated area of inquiry that might comprise at least a portion of your dissertation work.