**COMM Honors Degree and Thesis Planning**

**Getting Started & Finishing**

**Timeline:**

* **First Year** 
  + Meet with advisors for Honors, Major, and your Honors Faculty Advisor to make sure you are on track with coursework
  + Identify potential topics
  + Take courses that interest you
* **Second Year** 
  + Meet with advisors for Honors, Major, and your Honors Faculty Advisor to make sure you are on track with coursework
  + Take courses that interest you
  + Take upper division writing courses
  + Take upper division courses in major
  + Clearly articulate 1-3 thesis topics
* **Third Year**
  + Meet with advisors for Honors, Major, and your Honors Faculty Advisor to make sure you are on track with coursework
  + Take upper division courses and 5000-level courses
  + Meet with Honors Faculty Advisor to identity a Thesis Faculty Mentor
  + Establish a Thesis Faculty Mentor and Thesis Topic
  + Submit Honors Thesis Proposal Form to Honors College
  + Apply for UROP Funding
* **Fourth Year**
  + Meet with advisors for Honors, Major, and your Honors Faculty Advisor to make sure you are on track with coursework
  + Register for COMM 4999 Honors Thesis
  + Apply for graduation
  + Research and Write!
  + Share drafts of thesis with Thesis Faculty Mentor
  + Complete first full draft of thesis by February 15th for review by Thesis Faculty Mentor
  + Revise thesis by Spring Break and submit to Thesis Faculty Mentor, Honors Faculty Advisor, and Department Chair for review
  + Present research at UROP
  + Submit approved thesis to Honors College no later than end of April (or earlier!!!)

**Coursework:**

* Take courses from COMM faculty members (they can serve as your thesis faculty mentor)
* Take Honor 3200 Research Writing spring semester of your sophomore year, or fall semester of your junior year
* Take 5000 level courses that will involve more writing (writing that can expand into a thesis!)
* Pursue community engaged coursework, learning abroad opportunities, and internships as a way to establish connections and identify your interests

**Thesis Topics:**

* Pay attention to what interests you/makes you angry/sparks curiosity/impacts you personally
* Note exciting topics from your coursework – identify a topic you want to explore more deeply
* Enjoyed a course with a faculty member? Look up their faculty profile and see if you would like to assist them with their research (especially important for individuals pursuing quantitative/qualitative research)
* Pursue community engaged scholarship, learning abroad opportunities, or internships to identify topics that might interest you
* Set up Google Alerts on topics that interest you – see what stories you encounter that could be a launching point for your research
* Use Zotero as an easy way to start to categorize topics of interest: <https://www.zotero.org/>

**Thesis Faculty Mentor:**

* Meet with the COMM Honors Faculty Advisor to discuss topics and faculty members who are a match for your thesis
* Take advantage of research opportunities that are sent out to students
* Meet with your course professors to learn more about them and their research
* Review faculty profiles to see if anyone is pursuing a research topic that interests you
* Meet with faculty who might be a good match – email them to set up an appointment
* The “Ask”: Don’t assume faculty are available. Instead be propositional and polite

**Writing Tips:**

* Develop an **elevator speech**
  + Topic: What you want to examine in your research
  + Question: What intrigues you about your topic
  + Lens: Whose work/theory informs your thinking and your approach
  + Method: How you find answers to your questions
* **Focus** – put your thesis proposal (should be a short paragraph) in the header of your document so you see it as you write (avoid going down the “rabbit hole” of shiny objects)
* Use resources like the **University Writing Center** for support
* Use the **Thesis Template** to format your document (found on Honors website)
* Share **drafts** with your advisor early on in the writing process to make sure you are on the right track
* **Write** each day, even if it is only for 30 minutes
  + Create a detailed writing schedule that includes deadlines for when research will be complete, when your literature review will be written, when different sections of your thesis will be written (check with your Honors Faculty Advisor for a template)
* Focus with **Freedom Software**: <https://freedom.to/>
  + Turn off the Internet and WRITE!!!!
  + Turn off your phone (and then have your roommate hide it)
* Organize sources with **Zotero**: <https://www.zotero.org/>
  + Excellent bibliography source and has options for taking notes on articles, chapters, books, and for typing key quotes