



SENIOR THESIS GUIDELINES

The senior thesis is designed to encourage creative thinking and to stimulate individual research. A student may undertake a thesis in an area in which s/he has the necessary background. Ordinarily a thesis topic is chosen in the student's major or minor. It is also possible to choose an interdisciplinary topic.

Application to Complete a Senior Thesis

Interested students should decide upon a thesis topic as early as possible in the junior year so that adequate attention may be given to the project. In order to be eligible to apply to write a thesis, a student must have achieved a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.25 based upon all courses attempted at Carroll College. The application for writing a thesis must be submitted no later than **September 30 of the senior year** – fall semester graduates should consider submitting their thesis applications during the prior spring semester.

The Thesis Committee

The thesis committee consists of a director and two readers. The thesis director is a full-time Carroll College faculty member from the student's major discipline or approved by the department chair of the student's major. At least one reader must be from outside the student's major. The thesis director and the appropriate department chair must approve all readers. The thesis committee should assist and mentor the student during the entire project.

Protection of Human Participants

For any projects involving human participants (interviews, surveys, instruments, or observations), each student and his or her director must follow the guidelines published by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Students must obtain IRB approval prior to any data collection and must submit a copy of their IRB approval letter with their thesis application. See <https://www.carroll.edu/academic-services/institutional-review-board> for instructions. As part of the IRB approval process, each student and his or her director must also complete training by the National Cancer Institute Protection of Human Participants. **Theses that do not follow the IRB application/approval process will not be approved for academic credit nor sanctioned by Carroll College.**

Proposed Thesis Topic and Plan

All members of the thesis committee should participate in the selection of the thesis topic and the completion of a thesis plan. The thesis plan should include a description of the scope and nature of the thesis and a preliminary work schedule, which includes a timeline for completion of the thesis.

Credit Requirements

The thesis is to be completed for three (3) credits in the discipline that best matches the content of the thesis during the student's final semester at Carroll College; however it is expected that students will work on the thesis during multiple semesters. Students will indicate on their thesis application which semester they plan to graduate, and the Registrar's Office will complete the registration. If the thesis credits exceed the credit limit, the charge for additional credits will be waived. Honors Scholars should register for credits based on their discipline of study—only those completing a thesis grounded in the content of the Honors Scholars Program will register for HNR 499. Biology students will only be registered for 2 credits since they will also complete BI-477 for 2 credits.

Oral Presentation

An oral presentation of the senior thesis is the final component of the thesis process. Presentations are scheduled for all students during April following the completion of the thesis; many of the presentations occur during the Student Undergraduate Research Festival (SURF), or some departments will schedule their own presentation sessions. The student, the thesis director, and the department chair may request exceptions to the policy.

Departmental Guidelines

There are some guidelines that are best determined within the academic departments. Some of these are:

- A research seminar or other appropriate classes, either required or optional
- Thesis format, appropriate style, and length
- Appropriate thesis topics
- Requirements specific to the discipline
- Criteria for grading

Due Dates/Extensions

The completion date for the senior thesis is **May 1 of the senior year** (for fall semester graduates, the due date is **December 1**). The completed thesis, with appropriate signatures, must be submitted to the **Corette Library** in pdf format by this date. Review the guidelines for electronic submission at:

<https://www.carroll.edu/policies/thesis-policy>. The completion date and other due dates are to be observed as closely as possible. Requests for exceptions to the completion date are to be submitted, in writing, to the office of the Registrar. All requests must delineate reasons for the extension and indicate a new timeline for completion. The thesis director, department chair, and student must sign the request.

Graduation with Distinction Policy (effective August 1, 2016)

To be eligible for graduation with distinction, a student must successfully complete the senior thesis with a grade of “B” (3.0) or higher and must graduate with a cumulative grade point average of not less than 3.25. This designation is announced at Commencement. Transfers: To be eligible for graduation with distinction, a student must have completed 60 semester hours of course work at Carroll College. The required cumulative average will be calculated from all courses attempted at Carroll.