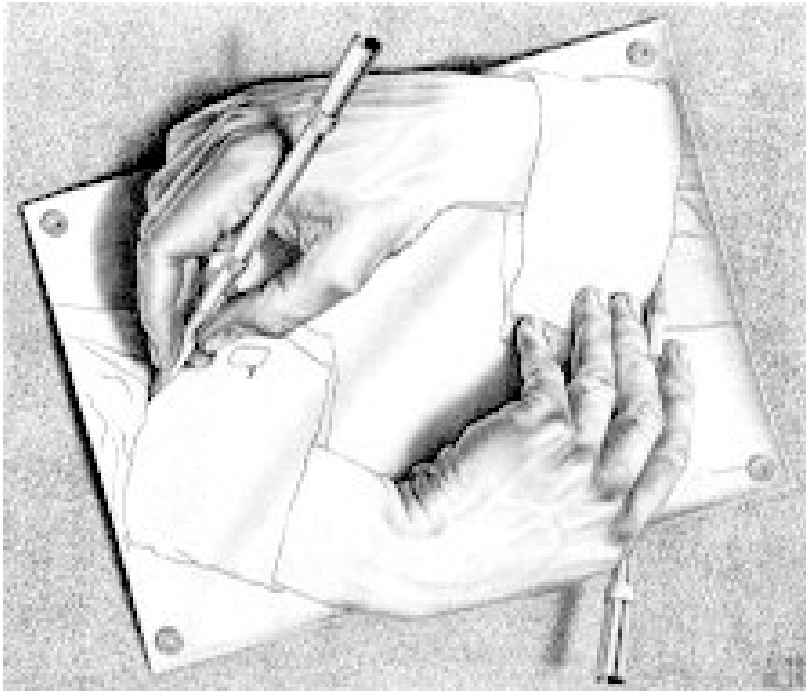


The Regis College Honors Program Senior Thesis Handbook



Maurits Cornelis Escher (Leeuwarden, June 17, 1898 - March 27, 1972 in Laren) was a Dutch mathematical artist known for his woodcuts, lithographs and mezzotints which feature impossible constructions, explorations of infinity, and tessellations. May he always inspire your impossible constructions and explorations of infinity!

Regis University
February 2007

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INTRODUCTION

SECTION I

Section I of this handbook contains detailed explanations for the various steps in the thesis process. Many of the topics are covered during our thesis research seminars beginning in the spring of your junior year, but the information is reiterated here for emphasis and reinforcement. This section also provides specific presentation guidelines.

THE THESIS ADVISOR

All theses must be formally directed by a full-time member of the Regis University faculty in an appropriate discipline and defended before a committee of the faculty which includes the advisor, a reader, and the Director of the Honors Program. Co-advisors are permitted, if the topic is interdisciplinary, and may be used in lieu of the typical advisor-reader arrangement. A student with a history major, for instance, might wish to do a thesis that deals with the literary trends of a particular historical period (e.g., the Renaissance, the 20th Century). In such a case, the student could have a primary advisor from History and a co-advisor from English. In general, however, the student chooses a single advisor in his/her major discipline and, with the help of that advisor (and the Honors Director, if necessary), judiciously chooses a reader for the project. The advisor should be not only a person quite knowledgeable about the area the student wishes to explore but also one with whom the student has a reasonably good working relationship. In some cases, a student may know the general topic he or she wishes to explore and will search for an advisor, whatever the topic, and will ask that person for guidance in selection a specific topic. Many faculty members, understandably, will not take on the direction of a thesis/project for a student whom they have not had in class or have not directed in previous independent study. Some advisors will allow the student wide choice of topic; others may prefer that the student join their own ongoing research.

Nota Bene: Although the level of involvement of the *faculty reader* is a matter of negotiation between the honors student and the thesis advisor (some readers are involved throughout the research and writing, others read completed chapters, others may only read the final version of the thesis), students must stay in close contact with their thesis advisor during the research and writing process. No more than two weeks should pass without contact between a *student and advisor*—in person, by phone or e.mail—regarding progress on the thesis/project. Even if students have nothing to “show” the advisor as far as written work is concerned, they should at least tell the advisor what they are reading, what kinds of problems (if any) they are encountering, etc. The advisor is not (or should not be) a person who comments occasionally and signs off on a finished project but a person who truly advises and directs the student’s work. An advisor can provide the student with valuable resources, can sometimes lend books, can serve as a sounding board for ideas, can challenge the student in numerous ways, and can comment on subject matter, research methods, writing style, organization, and

any other aspect of the thesis/project. In short, students should always keep in mind that independent study is understood to be *guided* independent study. Students should remember, too, that the faculty advisor is responsible for evaluating the final product of the research or creative work and must sign off on the completed work by assigning a letter grade and by actually signing the approval page in the thesis itself. Students who have not stayed in touch with the advisor throughout the various stages of the thesis process should not be surprised if the advisor is reluctant to approve the resulting product.

THE THESIS PROPOSAL

The thesis proposal is a formal document which sets forth the parameters of the intended work. Normally, thesis proposals are submitted during the spring of your junior year and in all cases should be approved by the end of that spring semester. Although formats vary somewhat by discipline, all proposals should include the following:

- A clear thesis statement, question, or hypothesis, as appropriate;
- An initial, somewhat abbreviated, literature review;
- A working bibliography of carefully selected works that bear on your topic;
- A demonstrated understanding of what constitutes sufficient and appropriate evidence, data, or support for your thesis, hypothesis, or question;
- A clear schedule that outlines thesis research and preliminary writing (be sure to include major milestones, such as the senior fall break approval, in your schedule);
- An advisor and reader willing to join you on your intellectual odyssey.

Some care, therefore, should be given both to the proposal content and its appearance. The proposal should be literate (i.e., demonstrate your ability to write as an independent scholar), it should have substance, and it should be presented neatly. It should reflect a carefully thought-out approach to the subject with sufficient elaboration to enable the advisor/reader and the Honors Advisory Council to know just what it is the student intends to do. Proposals that do not meet these minimal criteria will not be approved.

THE THESIS PRESENTATION

A thesis presentation is required of all students who complete the thesis/project. The committee is generally made up of three persons: the thesis advisor, the faculty reader, and the Director of the Honors Program. All thesis presentations must be completed by April 15th for a May graduation. All committee members should have a semi-final draft of the thesis (often accompanied by a draft of the power point slides for the presentation) at least *2 weeks prior to the presentation*. The defense cannot take place unless the committee members have received a copy of the thesis manuscript at least two weeks prior to the anticipated defense date; sometimes committee members prefer an even longer review period. Moreover, the student should not give the thesis advisor and the oral defense committee a copy of the thesis at the same time; the

committee members should receive their copies only after the thesis advisor has indicated that the thesis is ready to be defended. Any special requirements for presentation space or equipment must be coordinated at this time as well. (Normally, thesis students and their advisors receive a letter reminding them of specific deadlines for receipt of such information.)

Please note that the Thesis Advisor serves as Chairperson of the Thesis Committee and thus moderates the oral presentation. Additional faculty representatives present, or faculty members from the Honors Advisory Council are also welcome to join the Thesis Committee at the advisor's discretion.

It should be emphasized that the copy of the thesis presented to the defense committee is the penultimate copy. The final copy will be prepared after the defense so that the committee members may make corrections, suggest changes, and generally point out areas that might need additional attention. The student should meet with the advisor shortly after the defense to discuss suggested revisions.

At the presentation, the student normally opens with an overview statement of the purpose, method, and results of the thesis. Students will typically have about 15-20 minutes to outline their project, guide us through their research, and highlight their conclusions. Committee members then ask questions, usually in turn, in what turns out to be a relatively informal and lively exchange of ideas, lasting an average 15-20 minutes. Finally, the student will open up the presentation to questions from the audience. The thesis, as with all Honors coursework, is letter-graded and the committee may suggest an appropriate letter grade for the student's work; the thesis advisor, however, is responsible for determining and submitting the grade to the Honors Director.

THE CREATIVE THESIS

Students majoring in the Arts may opt for a non-traditional Thesis. For example, creative writers may work on a manuscript; artists may stage an exhibition, etc. Due to the nature of these types of theses, each one will need special approval and guidance from the Director and the Honors Council.

THE HONORS PORTFOLIO

In some cases, students—in consultation with advising faculty—will opt to present an Honors Portfolio in lieu of a thesis. Education majors, for example, have an extensive portfolio project associated with completing their major, and often this portfolio may be modified to also serve the Honors Program (typically the portfolio collection includes additional documentation linked to honors program goals, and includes a reflection essay in the 15-20 page range that integrates the portfolio artifacts with a carefully considered evaluation of academic and personal growth as it relates to involvement in the Regis Honors Program). Alternatively, students in other majors that require a thesis for completion (disciplinary honors, for example) may elect to construct a portfolio that includes the disciplinary thesis and other artifacts that showcase meaningful academic experiences and intellectual growth. These portfolios also include a reflection essay in

the 15-20 page range that integrates the portfolio artifacts with a carefully considered evaluation of the student's involvement in the Regis Honors Program,

THE PROGRESS REPORT

A progress report is due at the end of each semester or summer term prior to the semester in which the thesis is finally completed and defended. The report, for which we have no set form, need not be long. However, it should summarize in as much detail as necessary what has been accomplished in relation to the original proposal and should explain and justify any shifts in emphasis that have occurred. Typically, these reports are the final submission in the appropriate thesis preparation seminar (HO 493A or HO 493B) and will be outlined in the appropriate syllabus. The report should be signed by the student and the thesis advisor and should be submitted to the Honors Council by the end of final exam week.

THE MANUSCRIPT FORMAT

Margins: 1½ inches at the left and top; 1 inch at right and bottom; 2 inches at top on chapter headings. Please check your margins carefully on the computer. You may have to adjust the settings.

Paper: Use 16- or 20-lb. bond paper (preferably the latter) with at least 50% cotton content. You may use a cotton content higher than 50% but not less.

Copies: Photocopies or laser printed originals are acceptable for your final copy submitted to the Honors Council.

Number of copies: Please turn in two (2) copies — an original and an electronic copy — to the Honors Director within a week following your oral defense. The electronic copy will be filed permanently with the library, the other will be bound and sent to you during the fall following graduation. If your advisor or reader wants a copy, such copies must be in addition to those noted here.

Cover: We will send the copy you provide to the Honors Department to the Denver Bookbindery for permanent binding. The unbound copy must not be stapled, nor should it have holes punched in the side—it's best to submit it in a manila folder or large brown envelope. Do not bind preliminary copies for the defense.

Title and approval pages: All copies must contain a title page and approval page, as well as the permission forms for publication on the WWW and certificate of authorship. Models are included in this handbook. The approval page must be signed by the appropriate persons (Thesis Advisor, reader, and Honors Director) before the thesis/project will be accepted. The Honors Director signs last and occasionally delays signing until corrections are made if he sees errors in the final copies.

Pagination: All pages must be in the right order. See below for order of pages, including front matter. Note position of page numbers. Front matter (except for the title page which bears no number but is counted as page one) has the page number in lower-case Roman numbers centered at the bottom of the page about 5/8" from the bottom. Page numbers for all text pages, including chapter headings and the bibliography, should be centered in Arabic numbers at the bottom of the page, beginning with page "1" on the initial page of your text. (See an additional note at the end of the "Order of Pages—Front Matter" heading below.)

Style Guide: Please use the style guide (MLA, APA, etc.) appropriate for your discipline regarding spacing, footnote form, bibliographical form, etc. The guidelines above, however, take precedence over the style guides.

Figures: Illustrations, tables, charts, photographs, maps, etc. should be listed at the outset, referred to in the text before they appear, and captioned.

ORDER OF PAGES—FRONT MATTER, numbered in lower-case Roman numerals

1. Blank page
2. Title page
3. Approval page
4. Permission to Publish on WWW page
5. Certification of Authorship page
6. Blank page
7. Table of Contents
8. List of Figures (if any)
9. List of Illustrations (if any)
10. List of Tables (if any)
11. Preface, including acknowledgements.

NOTE: Front matter should be given small Roman numerals, beginning with the Title page as number one; Arabic numbers begin with the first page of the thesis itself, including the Introduction. The title page is considered to be page one of the front matter, but the numeral itself is not placed on the page. The approval page is given the number ii. The blank pages in the front matter are not assigned page numbers. Page numbers for front matter are normally centered at the bottom of the page.

SUGGESTED TIMETABLE

Below is a typical timetable for the completion of your work. If you adhere to it closely, you should not run into great difficulties.

HO 493A (Spring Junior Year)

1. Enroll in “Honors Thesis Research” HO 493 A.
2. Research the possible topics.
3. Decide on a topic (typically no later than spring break).
4. Choose an advisor.
5. Write thesis proposal and obtain written approvals of faculty and Director.
6. Begin background reading.
7. Continue reading and researching during the summer.

HO 493B (Fall Senior Year)

1. Enroll in “Honors Thesis Research” HO 493B.
2. This seminar is largely independent study, although we will meet periodically to assess progress and share insights.
3. Meet with advisor at least every two weeks to show work in progress, discuss problems, discuss readings, and make any necessary adjustments in timetable.

4. Submit an outline, introduction, and literature review by the Monday following Fall Break to the Honors Program Director. This should be submitted with thesis Advisor's approval (see approval form in Section II).
5. Try to complete the research and most of the writing by the end of the fall semester. (Although this seems early, please remember that next semester you will be making revisions, preparing the thesis for presentation, and defending your thesis.)
6. We will begin preparing for your oral presentation by making short presentations to peers and faculty throughout this semester.

HO 499 (Spring Senior Year)

1. Enroll in "Honors Thesis" HO 499
2. Finish up loose ends of research/writing.
3. Schedule your public thesis presentation with your advisor and the Honors Director. It is up to you to work with your thesis advisor and reader to find a compatible date. Your oral defense will normally be held in March or early April.
4. Make any changes you and your advisor agree upon, and have copies ready for you and your committee at least two weeks before the presentation date (i.e., one for you and one for each member of the committee).
5. After the presentation, make any changes required by the committee. Check final format before copying to ensure adherence to guidelines.
6. Submit two (2) copies minimum on thesis-quality paper, individually collected in file folders or manila envelopes and bound only by a clip (no staples, brass tabs, etc.) to the Honors Department. Include your name, contact information (an address/phone number where we can send your bound copy of the thesis several months AFTER you graduate) and an abbreviated title that is 55 characters (including spaces) or less.

The cost of professionally binding your Thesis according to University Honors Program standards is approximately \$20.00 per copy. The Program will pay for the one copy that will be officially catalogued and placed in the Regis Library, as well as for a second copy for you. Any additional copies, such as those for advisors or readers, are your monetary responsibility.

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION AND REMINDERS

1. Any exceptions to the rules and regulations governing the senior thesis must be made by the Director on an individual basis. Unless the circumstances are very unusual, extensions will not be granted for more than one or two weeks. Longer extensions cause problems with graduation paperwork. **DO NOT PLAN TO GRADUATE AND THEN COMPLETE YOUR THESIS AFTERWARDS. GRADE CHANGES ARE NO LONGER PROCESSED AFTER THE DEGREE HAS BEEN POSTED ON YOUR TRANSCRIPT, AND THE GRADUATION WITH HONORS NOTATION ON YOUR TRANSCRIPT WILL NO LONGER BE POSSIBLE.**
2. Please allow for appropriate “turn-around” time in the preparation of your manuscript. For example, if you submit your rough draft to your thesis advisor for his/her comments on the day that professor has received forty term papers from a class, you will probably have to wait a few days for comments on your work. Please plan accordingly.
3. The biggest problem students encounter in the completion of their work is not level of difficulty, problems with obtaining materials, or miscommunications with the advisors (though all of these have posed occasional problems); it is, instead, the misjudgment of the time available to them. The time frame for completing work often goes askew, and work planned for fall semester doesn’t get done because of other pressing demands, and the spring semester provides no catch-up time. This is why we encourage students to try hard to begin the background reading and basic research during the HO 493A semester and summer prior to the senior year. The most accurate way to determine the length of time it takes to complete the thesis is to first calculate the longest possible time it might take, and then double it. If you will be studying abroad either the spring of your junior year or fall of your senior year, be sure to coordinate with the Honors Director. You may wish to enroll in HO 493A or B for 2 credits and work doubly hard the semester you are here, given that making progress on a thesis from half-way around the world is unlikely.
4. Matters of courtesy: Although it is not required, you may wish to provide your advisor with a bound copy of the completed thesis. The velo-binding done at Kinko’s or elsewhere is inexpensive, and the product is attractive. Most faculty don’t need or want the higher priced permanent binding. It is also considered good form to say “thank you” to the persons who help you along the way — especially to your faculty advisor and reader.
5. Each spring the Honors Program sponsors a Senior Forum—typically a brunch or lunch-time gathering—where we celebrate your work. Advisors typically attend and introduce the graduating seniors, then students briefly present the progress or results of their theses/projects to the community.

SECTION II

TIPS FOR THESE ADVISORS

1. Know what you are getting into before accepting thesis advising. Consult the Honors Director when in doubt.
2. Be selective. Prefer students whom you have had in class and who you are convinced are capable and committed. Be wary of taking on a student as an advisor if you are uncomfortable with your expertise in the students' area of interest. Suggest a colleague whose subject expertise is better suited to the student proposal, and perhaps agree to be a reader instead.
3. Let the student know that you take the process very seriously, will be putting in a great deal of effort, and therefore expect a strong commitment of time and effort on the student's part. Help the student be realistic about the nature of the work.
4. Discuss with the student what it means to be a scholar or creative artist. In the thesis/project, the student is shifting from being a student to becoming a scholar or artist, from being a consumer of knowledge to becoming a producer of knowledge, from performing assignments and exercises to developing and completing an individually-determined project. The student will spend over a year researching literature, working on an experiment, or designing and producing creative work. It may take considerable time just to determine the final topic or direction of the work. Yet this is just the initial stage, for the thesis itself still has to be written and polished.
5. Spend a great deal of time helping the student develop the research design or plan for creative work; much of this determined even before the proposal is submitted so that it can be explained there. Although this process is frustrating and time consuming, students must have a very clear idea of what they are going to do and how they are going to do it.
6. Meet with your student regularly—at least every two weeks. Never let the student leave your office without setting a specific date for the next meeting and specific tasks to accomplish by that time. E-mail dialogue may help maintain contact.
7. Be flexible. The students do work hard, but they cannot always meet the deadlines they or you set.
8. Keep careful notes. It is easy to lose track of what is going on with a project. A log of conversations with the student is ideal for monitoring the progress and recollecting issues you have covered and deadlines and suggestions you have given.
9. Consider involving students in your own research. You may enjoy the project more, you'll do a better job of directing the project, and you may benefit in terms of

developing your own research. Just be sure to give credit for any share the student has in your work.

10. Give the student a large measure of initiative, independence, and responsibility. At the same time, be constantly ready to offer suggestions, direction, and answers to questions.
11. Consider taking the student to a professional meeting and, in some cases, helping the student prepare for publication or offering co-authorship. Several students have done poster sessions for papers at state and national scholarly meetings under sponsorship by their advisors.
12. Enjoy. The students are wonderful, and you will develop a fruitful relationship with them.

TIPS FOR STUDENTS

Tips for Getting Organized

- Start early: don't wait for the last moment and make sure to plan ahead
- Make time to research and write
- Develop a timeline for your project
- Find a good workspace and develop a healthy writing routine
- Always have two or more copies of your thesis (electronic and hard copies)

Approaching Your Advisor

- Look for an Advisor with experience and expertise in your field of interest
- Find an advisor wanting to advise
- Look for a personality match
- Ask your peers and other faculty members for recommendations
- Make sure to sell yourself and your research

Working with your advisor

- Set expectations upfront: make sure to communicate with your advisor frequently
- Be proactive and straightforward
- Be honest
- Prepare for Meetings
- Honor deadlines: give your advisor plenty of time to read your work
- Turn to your advisor for feedback and support
- Be appreciative

Writing Your Thesis

- Begin to write early
- Make each chapter stand on its own
- Don't write a chapter for a chapter's sake
- Seek outside opinions on your thesis
- Expect to write numerous drafts and be willing to rewrite
- Consider your audience
- Document your sources thoroughly
- Make your conclusion more than a summary
- Remember deadlines:
 - Thesis presentations must be complete by April 15th for May graduation
 - Committee members must receive a copy of your thesis *at least two weeks prior* to the defense.

Scheduling for Success**Credit:**

| | <u>Semester</u> | <u>Year</u> | <u>Credits</u> |
|---------|-----------------|-------------|----------------|
| HO 493A | Spring | Junior Year | 1 |
| HO 493B | Fall | Senior Year | 1 |
| HO 499 | Spring | Senior Year | 1 |

Notes:

When students are studying abroad or have other schedule conflicts, the credit hours for HO 493B may be extended to 2 hours in lieu of enrolling in HO 493A. However, this flexibility is for administrative purposes—in every case students should begin their thesis research and complete a proposal during the spring of their junior year.

Senior Honors Thesis Proposal Coversheet
(attach this coversheet, with signatures, to your final proposal)

Date:

Name:

Local Address:

Local Phone:

Email:

Major(s):

Minor(s):

Anticipated Date of Graduation:

Thesis/Project Working Title:

Description:

Faculty Advisor/Reader

I agree to direct the Honors Thesis/Project as described above.

Name
Advisor

Name
Co-Advisor/Reader

Honors Senior Thesis Research Seminar-- HO 493B Fall Approval

By fall break (mid-October) of your senior year, you must have approval from your advisor and reader to continue with the thesis process. If, for any variety of reasons, you have been unable to complete a substantial portion of your thesis research by this time, it is unlikely that your thesis will be satisfactorily finished in time for an April defense and May graduation. To continue with the thesis process, you must have an outline, introduction, and literature review approved by your advisor and reader.

Approval Form: Outline, Introduction, Literature Review

Date of Submission: _____

Name of Student: _____

Department of Major: _____

Thesis Title:

Advisor: _____

Reader: _____

The following materials have been submitted and approved:

Outline ____

Introduction ____

Literature Review ____

Advisor's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Reader's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

SAMPLE TITLE PAGE

TITLE

(all caps)

(Single space if title is longer than one line)

**A thesis submitted to
Regis College
The Honors Program
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for Graduation with Honors**

by

Student's Name

May 2006

(i.e., month of student's graduation)

SAMPLE APPROVAL PAGE

Thesis written by

Student's Name

Approved by

Thesis Advisor

Thesis Reader or Co-Advisor

Accepted by

Director, University Honors Program

SAMPLE ABSTRACT

Name

Major

TITLE
(page length)

Advisor's Name

(Begin typing here and continue for approximately 200 words. Text of abstract is double-spaced.)

Note: The abstract is not bound into your thesis. It is submitted separately from your thesis; we keep copies of all the abstracts in a special notebook in the University Honors Program Office.

SAMPLE TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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(page no. centered)

REGIS UNIVERSITY

Regis College Honors Program Honors Thesis

Authorization to Publish Student Work on WWW

I, _____, the undersigned student,
Print student name
 in the Regis College Honors Program hereby authorize Regis University to publish through a Regis University owned and maintained web server, the document described below (“Work”). I acknowledge and understand that the Work will be freely available to all users of the World Wide Web under the condition that it can only be used for legitimate, non-commercial academic research and study. I understand that this restriction on use will be contained in a header note on the Regis University web site but will not be otherwise policed or enforced. I understand and acknowledge that under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act I have no obligation to release the Work to any party for any purpose. I am authorizing the release of the Work as a voluntary act without any coercion or restraint. On behalf of myself, my heirs, personal representatives and beneficiaries, I do hereby release Regis University, its officers, employees and agents from any claims, causes, causes of action, law suits, claims for injury, defamation, or other damage to me or my family arising out of or resulting from good faith compliance with the provisions of this authorization. This authorization shall be valid and in force until rescinded in writing.

Print Title of Document(s) to be published: _____

Student Signature

Date

Check if applicable:

The Work contains private or proprietary information of the following parties and their attached permission is required as well:

Complete if you do not wish to publish your work on the WWW:

I do not authorize Regis University to publish my work on the WWW.

Student Signature

Date

Regis University
Regis College Honors Program
Honors Thesis

Certification of Authorship for Honors Thesis

Print Student's Name _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

Date of Submission _____ Degree Program _____

Title of Submission _____

Submitted To _____

Certification of Authorship:

I hereby certify that I am the author of this document and that any assistance I received in its preparation is fully acknowledged and disclosed in the document. I have also cited all sources from which I obtained data, ideas or words that are copied directly or paraphrased in the document. Sources are properly credited according to accepted standards for professional publications. I also certify that this paper was prepared by me for the purpose of partial fulfillment of requirements for the Regis College Honors Program.

Student Signature

Date

Contact Information and Check List

To assist you in planning, we have provided space below for you to write in names/deadlines/phone numbers, etc. as you complete the thesis process.

| | | |
|----------------|-------|--------|
| Thesis Advisor | Phone | e-mail |
|----------------|-------|--------|

| | | |
|--------------------------|-------|--------|
| Thesis Co-Advisor/Reader | Phone | e-mail |
|--------------------------|-------|--------|

| | | |
|-----------------|-------|--------|
| Honors Director | Phone | e-mail |
|-----------------|-------|--------|

Date of Senior Forum _____

Date of Oral Presentation _____

Date Thesis is due _____

Check list for review:

- Select Thesis Advisor
- Select topic and write proposal
- Submit proposal to Honors prior to end of junior spring semester
- Submit progress report at end of each term (junior spring, summer between junior and senior year, senior fall)
- Submit draft(s) to Thesis Advisor
- Participate in Senior Forum
- Submit draft approved by Director to oral presentation committee
- Set date/time/place for oral presentation
- Defend thesis
- Make required final revisions
- Check format with Honors prior to making final copies
- Submit abstract and two signed copies on thesis-quality paper

The Regis College Honors Program Senior Thesis Handbook is adapted from the Kent State University schema, and the evolutions of it incorporated by our colleagues at the Loyola Marymount University Honors Program. The handbook *Conquering Your Undergraduate Thesis* (Natatvi Guides, 2002) was also a source. Of course, many additions and modifications of these guiding documents have been incorporated in order to bring the Handbook into conformance with Regis College expectations and practices. We welcome your appropriate feedback that we may revise and further develop the Handbook and Thesis Program.