

DEPARTMENT OF
COMMUNITY HEALTH
SENIOR HONORS
THESIS GUIDELINES
2019-2020



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What is a Senior Honors Thesis in the Department of Community Health?

A Community Health senior honors thesis is a comprehensive, 60 to 100-page (typically) scholarly written product of a student's independent research, completed in senior year.

Senior Honors Thesis Tufts *University* Requirements

The **university** requirements to complete a senior honors thesis in Community Health are the following:

1. Be a senior
2. Be in good academic standing. (You will be considered for academic probation by the Committee on Academic Standing at the end of any semester in which you earned one credit or fewer or have GPA lower than 1.67. If you are put on academic probation, you will no longer be in good academic standing. For more information please visit: <http://students.tufts.edu/academic-advice-and-support/academic-advising/what-we-offer/guidance-academic-policies/academic-alert-and-probation>)
3. Have been on the Dean's List at least twice before the senior year. *There is a waiver process for transfer students and others who have not met this criterion.**
4. Meet departmental criteria for the major or program in which you will pursue the honors thesis.
5. Have approval of the department chair of Community Health (indicated by a signature on your Honors Thesis Candidate Form) submitted in October 2019.

*Student who do not meet the eligibility criteria specified above can work with their faculty chair to petition the University to receive approval to complete a Senior Honors Thesis. The petition should be sent in the form of an email letter, from Dr. Lynne Pepall (Chair of CH) attesting to the student's ability to successfully complete a thesis, to Dean Carmen Lowe.

Source: <http://students.tufts.edu/academic-advice-and-support/academic-advising/what-we-offer/senior-honors-thesis>

Senior Honors Thesis *CH Department Guidelines*

The **departmental** requirements to complete a senior honors thesis in Community Health are the following:

1. You have a thesis committee chair who is a CH faculty member
2. Your GPA is 3.5+
3. You have completed all relevant methodological coursework:

CH 30: Community Health Research Methods or approved alternative

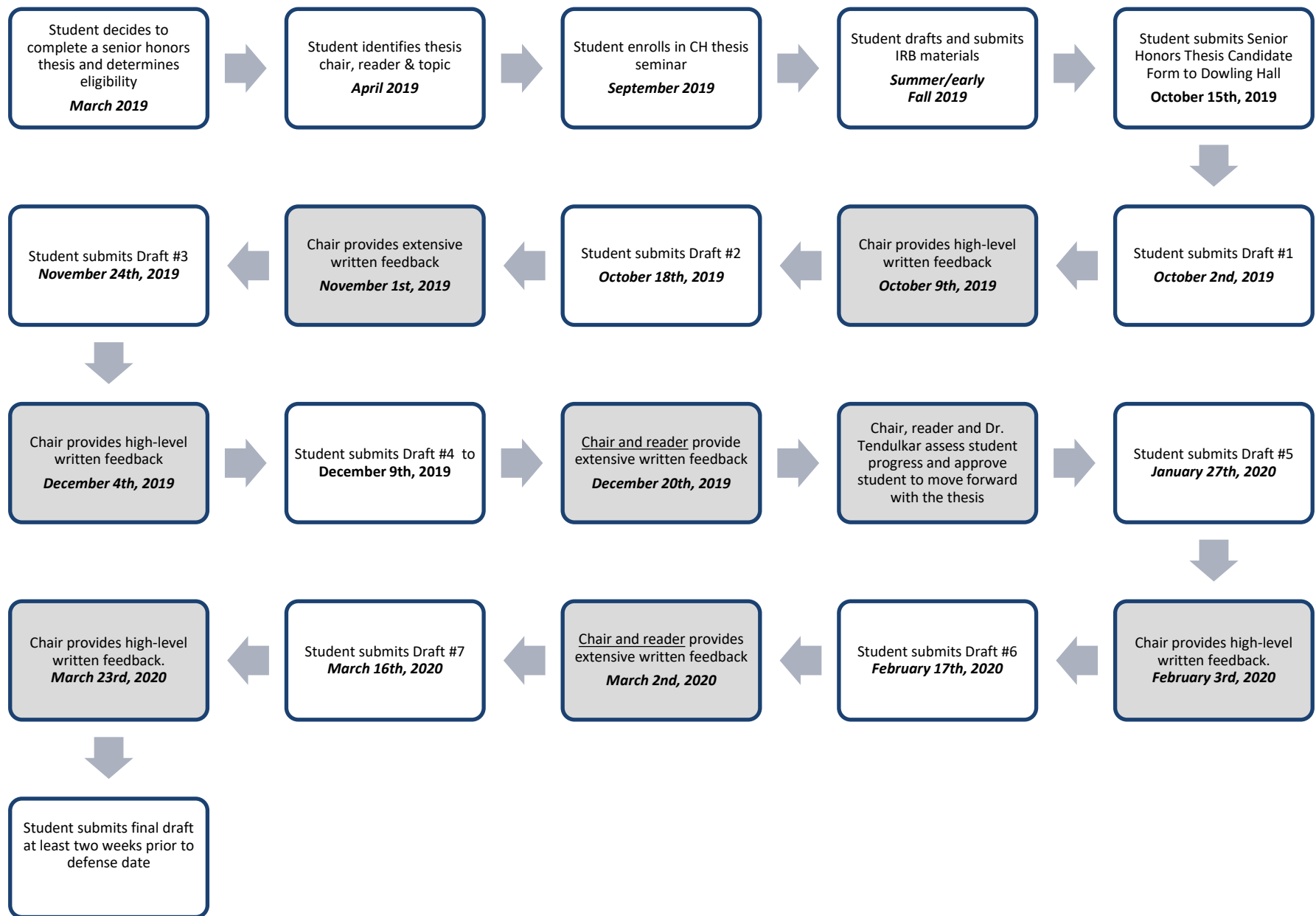
1 or more statistics courses at Tufts University (AP stats is not sufficient)

CH 154: Principals of Epidemiology

CH 110? (for quantitative theses): Introduction to Data Management in Stata or a demonstrated proficiency with some type of statistical software (R, Stata, SPSS, etc.)

CH 102 (for qualitative theses): Qualitative Methods

Overview of Community Health Thesis Process



Suggested high-level thesis monthly activities

SEPTEMBER 2019

- Meet twice or more with your thesis chair
 - Discuss process for working with your committee, expectations and committee composition
 - Review Assignments #1-#4 with your committee
- Complete Assignments #1-#4 for the thesis seminar
 - Assignment #1: Draft a Gantt Chart with activities and proposed timeline through December 2019
 - Assignment #2: Draft 2-3 paragraphs of background content related to your topic, with 3 citations. Try to include at least one review article and utilize a reference management software such as Zotero to organize your citations
 - Assignment #3: Draft a research question and 2-3 research aims
 - Assignment #4: Download and review IRB submission paperwork, develop plan for completion including questions for IRB staff and committee
- In collaboration with your thesis committee, determine how to access data (if secondary), develop data access agreements if necessary
- In collaboration with your thesis committee, develop your data collection methods (if primary), work with partners to refine methods
- Meet with a librarian for support for compiling literature

OCTOBER 2019

- Meet twice or more with thesis chair
 - Review Assignments #5-#11 with your committee
 - Discuss any concerns, questions, challenges
- Complete Assignments #5-#11 for the thesis seminar
 - Assignment #5: Submit your Thesis Draft #1 (5-page background, double-spaced with 12 citations). See Thesis guidelines for more details on submission.
 - Assignment #6: Revise your 5-page background section, incorporating input from Dr. Tendulkar
 - Assignment #7: Submit IRB paperwork to Tufts IRB
 - Assignment #8: Submit Senior Honors Thesis Candidate Form online
 - Assignment #9: Submit your Thesis Draft #2 (13 pages double-spaced with 20 citations). See Thesis guidelines for more details on submission.
 - Assignment #10: Develop a methods outline
 - Assignment #11: Develop a plan for analysis
- Schedule one on one meetings with Dr. Tendulkar
- Acquire data (if secondary)

- In collaboration with your thesis committee, begin planning for fieldwork (e.g., finalize tool, develop data collection procedures) (if primary)

NOVEMBER 2019

- Meet twice or more with thesis chair
- Schedule one on one meetings with Dr. Tendulkar
- Fieldwork and data collection (if primary data)
- Clean data (secondary data)
- Conduct descriptive analyses
- Complete Assignment #12
 - Submit your Thesis Draft #3 (20 pages double-spaced with 30 citations). See Thesis guidelines for more details on submission.
- In collaboration with your thesis committee, refine your plan for analysis/develop table shells

DECEMBER 2019

- Continue fieldwork and data collection (if primary data)
- Continue data analysis (if secondary data analysis)
- Complete Assignment #13
 - Submit your Thesis Draft #4 (25 pages double-spaced with 40 citations and 3-page, double-spaced methods outline). See Thesis guidelines for more details on submission.
- Meet with thesis chair specifically to discuss progress and receive feedback over winter break and obtain approval from thesis chair and Dr. Tendulkar to proceed with thesis.

JANUARY 2020

- Meet with full thesis committee and discuss progress in accessing/collecting data; if data collection is not yet complete, discuss a planned “end date” for data collection, regardless of sample size
- Schedule thesis defense and reserve a room
- Finalize methods section
- Submit your Thesis Draft #5 (Background: 25 pgs double-spaced, 40 citations; Methods: 10 pgs, double-spaced)

FEBRUARY 2020

- Meet with thesis chair at least twice
- Submit Thesis Draft #6 (Background: 25 pgs double-spaced, 40 citations; Methods: 10 pgs, double-spaced, Analysis: 5 pgs, double-spaced)
- Submit substantive data analysis beyond exploratory analyses in polished format (tables, figures, etc.)

MARCH 2020

- Meet with thesis chair at least twice
- Finalize results section
- Draft discussion section
- Submit Thesis Draft #7 (Background: 25 pgs double-spaced, 40 citations; Methods: 10 pgs, double-spaced, Analysis: 5 pgs, double-spaced, Results: 7 pgs, double-spaced, Discussion: 3 pages, double-spaced)
- Discuss external dissemination plans (Journal article? Conference? Etc.) with committee
- Outline defense presentation

APRIL 2020

- Submit a final version of your thesis to your committee 2+ weeks before defense date
- Finalize and practice defense presentation
- Defend your thesis!!
- Incorporate feedback from your committee and submit revised to committee
- Submit your thesis to the digital archives at Tufts
- CELEBRATE YOUR TREMENDOUS ACCOMPLISHMENT!

Community Health Senior Honors Thesis FIRST Draft

Background: 5 pgs, double-spaced, 12 citations

DUE: October 2nd, 2019

The outline below provides you with information on developing the 1st draft of your thesis. This first draft will demonstrate to your committee that your proposed research is sound and that you have the capacity and skills to complete the thesis in the time allotted. Your first draft should be 5 pages, double-spaced, with 12 citations, Times New Roman, 12-point font, with 1-inch margins. The five pages should only include your research aims and background. Any additional materials requested will be in addition to these 5 pages. Students are required to discuss the draft, prior to submission, with their thesis chairs to ensure that both the student and the chair have the same expectations for what will be produced in this first draft. Please submit the first draft on Canvas.

The first draft should include the following:

1) Cover page

- Thesis Title
- “First Draft Presented by [Student name in ALL CAPS]”
- Month and Year
- Names of your thesis chair and readers

2) Research questions and aims

3) **A background section (12 citations):** The background consists of a carefully constructed literature review incorporating high-quality, credible and recent evidence. The purpose of the background is to discuss what other scholars have written about your topic, situate your thesis in this broader context and highlight the gaps in the evidence base that will be filled by your study. A well-researched and written background section will ultimately allow you to demonstrate the significance of your research in the field of community health. Most CH students ultimately incorporate 40-70 sources however for this first draft include a minimum of 12 high-quality, credible and recent sources from the literature. If possible, include a review article. Please use APA format for all citations. For more information on this citation style click here: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html

4) **Thesis timeline:** Please include a timeline of your proposed thesis activities for Fall 2019.

5) **Reference List:** Include a list of references divided into two categories: a) the list of references that you cited in your background and 2) the list of additional references you plan to cite, in the future, in your thesis. Place an asterisk next to any references that represents a seminal or key article in the content area of your thesis.

6) **Questions or Concerns:** Include 3-5 key comments/questions you have (e.g. challenges, methodological questions etc.) for the committee to consider related to the execution of the senior honors thesis

Community Health Senior Honors Thesis SECOND Draft

Background: 13 pgs double-spaced, 20 citations

DUE: October 18th, 2019

The outline below provides you with information on developing the 2nd draft of your thesis. This second draft will demonstrate to your committee that you are making good progress on your literature review. This second draft should be 13 pages, double-spaced with 20 citations, Times New Roman, 12-point font, with 1-inch margins. The 13 pages should only include your research aims and background. Any additional materials requested will be in addition to these 13 pages. Students are required to discuss the draft, prior to submission, with their thesis chairs to ensure that both the student and the chair have the same expectations for what will be produced in this first draft. Please submit the second draft to Canvas.

The second draft should include the following:

1) Cover page

- Thesis Title
- “Second Draft Presented by [Student name in ALL CAPS]”
- Month and Year
- Names of your thesis chair and readers

2) Statement of Research aims

- 3) **A background section (20 citations):** Continue to incorporate feedback from your committee and Dr. Tendulkar and revise and expand your literature review.
- 4) **Thesis timeline:** Please include an updated timeline of your proposed thesis activities for Fall 2019.
- 5) **Reference List:** Include a list of references divided into two categories: a) the list of references that you cited in your background and 2) the list of additional references you plan to cite, in the future, in your thesis.
- 6) **Questions or Concerns:** Include 3-5 key comments/questions you have (e.g. challenges, methodological questions etc.) for the committee to consider related to the execution of the senior honors thesis

Community Health Senior Honors Thesis THIRD Draft

Background: 20 pgs double-spaced, 30 citations

DUE: November 24th, 2019

The outline below provides you with information on developing the 3rd draft of your thesis. This third draft will demonstrate to your committee that you are continuing to develop your literature review. The literature review component of this draft should be 20 pages, double-spaced with 30 citations, Times New Roman, 12-point font, with 1-inch margins. The 20 pages should only include your research aims and background. Any additional materials requested will be in addition to these 20 pages. Students are required to discuss the draft, prior to submission, with their thesis chairs to ensure that both the student and the chair have the same expectations for what will be produced in this first draft. Please submit the draft to Canvas.

The third draft should include the following:

1) Cover page

- Thesis Title
- “Third Draft Presented by [Student name in ALL CAPS]”
- Month and Year
- Names of your thesis chair and readers

2) Statement of Research aims

- 3) **A background section (30 citations):** Continue to incorporate feedback from your committee and Dr. Tendulkar and revise and expand your literature review.
- 4) **Thesis timeline:** Please include an updated timeline of your proposed thesis activities for Fall 2019.
- 5) **Reference List:** Include a list of references divided into two categories: a) the list of references that you cited in your background and 2) the list of additional references you plan to cite, in the future, in your thesis.
- 6) **Questions or Concerns:** Include 3-5 key comments/questions you have (e.g. challenges, methodological questions etc.) for the committee to consider related to the execution of the senior honors thesis

Community Health Senior Honors Thesis FOURTH Draft

Background: 25 pgs, 40 citations; Methods: 3 pgs, all double-spaced

DUE: December 9th, 2019

The outline below provides you with information on developing the 4th draft of your thesis. The fourth draft should include a complete background section (25 pages double-spaced with 40 citations) and the beginning of a methods section (3 pages double-spaced), Times New Roman, 12-point font, with 1-inch margins. Students are required to discuss the fourth draft, prior to submission, with their thesis chairs to ensure that both the student and the chair have the same expectations for what will be produced in this draft. Please submit the draft to Canvas.

- 1) **Cover Page:**
 - Thesis Title
 - “Fourth Draft Presented by [Student name in ALL CAPS]”
 - Month and Year
 - Names of your thesis chair and readers

- 2) **A background section (minimum of 40 citations) and research aims:** It is expected that students will have completed their literature review (a minimum of 40 sources) in preparation for the fourth draft and synthesized this literature, highlighting the importance of the topic/issue they are exploring to community health and explaining how the topic/issue will improve scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice in community health. Please use APA format for all citations.

- 3) **A 3-page outline of your methods section:** This is the section of your thesis where you will outline the methods and procedures you will utilize to achieve your research aims. Please include the following:
 - i) **Research Design:** Describe your general plan for accomplishing your research aims (e.g., qualitative/quantitative, descriptive, explanatory, survey etc.).
 - ii) **Data Source or plan for data collection:** Describe your data source and state whether the data source is secondary or primary. If you are accessing secondary data, describe the data source (e.g., who collected the data, the size of the dataset, key variables in the dataset, when was it collected, who the data was collected from, whether you have access to the data source already). If you are proposing to collect your own data briefly describe your plan for data collection (e.g., how you will collect your data, who and how many participants you will collect data from, how you will access yours participants, partnerships that will support your data collection efforts, when you plan to collect your data, whether you will develop tools to collect your data and if yes, your plan for tool development)
 - iii) **Your primary outcomes of interest:** For a quantitative study, describe the key outcome variable (e.g. blood pressure, executive functioning). For a qualitative study, describe the concepts of interest.
 - iv) **Your plan for analysis:** Briefly (<100 word) describe your proposed analytic methods (e.g., descriptive statistics, thematic analysis etc.). State if you plan to use a software program.
 - v) **Ethical Considerations:** Please describe the status of IRB approval. If you have obtained approval, note the approval date and IRB #. If you are awaiting approval, include the status and the anticipated approval date.

- 4) **Thesis timeline:** Please include an updated timeline of your proposed thesis activities for Spring 2020.

- 5) **Reference List:** Include an updated list of references.

- 6) **Questions or Concerns:** Include 3-5 key comments/questions you have (e.g. challenges, methodological questions etc.) for the committee to consider related to the execution of the senior honors thesis

Community Health Senior Honors Thesis FIFTH Draft

Background: 25 pgs, 40 citations; Methods: 10 pgs, all double-spaced

DUE: January 27th, 2020

The outline below provides you with information on developing the fifth draft of your senior honors thesis research. At this point, you should have a complete background section and should work to substantially expand your methods section. The fifth draft will demonstrate to your committee your continued commitment to your thesis, and substantial progress towards describing your methods. A fifth draft should typically be 35-40 pages in length, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point font, with 1-inch margins. Students are required to discuss the fifth draft, prior to submission, with their thesis chairs to ensure that both the student and the chair have the same expectations for what will be produced in this draft. Please submit the first draft to your committee and to Dr. Tendulkar via email and on Canvas.

1) **Cover Page:**

- Thesis Title
- “Fifth Draft Presented by [Student name in ALL CAPS]”
- Month and Year
- Names of your thesis chair and readers

2) **A complete background section (minimum of 40 citations) and research aims:** It is expected that students will have completed their literature review (a minimum of 40 sources) in this draft and incorporated any feedback from their committee. The background section should end with a statement of the research aims.

3) **A methods section (10 pages):** It is expected that students will have made substantial progress in outlining the methods and procedures required to achieve their aims in the second draft. The methods and analysis section should describe the overall strategy and methodology that student is using to accomplish the research aims as described below.

- (a) A description of the research design
- (b) A description of the research setting/site
- (c) A description of the study sample and sampling strategy
- (d) Procedures for data collection *or* a description of the data source
- (e) A description of any partnerships that facilitated the research
- (f) A description of the data collection tools (developed or utilized), including a description of tool development if relevant and if possible, inclusion of a copy of all the data collection instruments
- (g) A brief plan for analysis:
 - (i) For quantitative studies, a description of how all the key measures (e.g. outcomes, covariates etc.) will be constructed from the tools, how missing data will be handled, what statistical tests will be performed
 - (ii) For qualitative studies, a description of how the data is prepared for analysis (e.g. transcription, data familiarization process, coding, assessment of inter-rater reliability)
- (h) It is expected that students will have obtained IRB approval by the time this draft is submitted, and they should include a copy of their IRB approval letter.

4) **Reference List:** Include an updated list of references.

5) **Questions or Concerns:** Include 3-5 key comments/questions you have (e.g. challenges, methodological questions etc.) for the committee to consider related to the execution of the senior honors thesis

Community Health Senior Honors Thesis SIXTH Draft

Background: 25 pgs, 40 citations; Methods: 10 pgs, Analysis: 5 pgs, all double-spaced

DUE: February 17th, 2020

The outline below provides you with information on developing the sixth draft of your senior honors thesis research. At this point, you should have a complete background and methods section and should work to write your plan for analysis. A fifth draft should typically be 40-45 pages in length, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point font, with 1-inch margins.

Students are required to discuss the sixth draft, prior to submission, with their thesis chairs to ensure that both the student and the chair have the same expectations for what will be produced in this draft. Please submit the first draft to your committee and to Dr. Tendulkar via email and on Canvas.

1) **Cover Page:**

- Thesis Title
- “Sixth Draft Presented by [Student name in ALL CAPS]”
- Month and Year
- Names of your thesis chair and readers

2) **A complete background section (minimum of 40 citations) and research aims:** It is expected that students will have completed their literature review (a minimum of 40 sources) in this draft and incorporated any feedback from their committee. The background section should end with a statement of the research aims.

3) **A complete methods section (10 pages):** It is expected that students will have completed their methods section.

4) **A plan for analysis (5 pages):**

- a. For quantitative studies, a description of how all the key measures (e.g. outcomes, covariates etc.) will be constructed from the tools, how missing data will be handled, what statistical tests will be performed.
- b. For qualitative studies, a description of how the data is prepared for analysis (e.g. transcription, data familiarization process, coding, assessment of inter-rater reliability).

5) **Reference List:** Include an updated list of references.

6) **Questions or Concerns:** Include 3-5 key comments/questions you have (e.g. challenges, methodological questions etc.) for the committee to consider related to the execution of the senior honors thesis

Community Health Senior Honors Thesis SEVENTH Draft

Background: 25 pgs, 40 citations; Methods: 10 pgs, Analysis: 5 pgs, Results: 7 pgs, Discussion: 3 pages, all double-spaced

DUE: March 16th, 2020

The outline below provides you with information on developing the seventh draft of your senior honors thesis research. At this point, you should have a complete background, methods and analysis section and should work to write up your results and outline your discussion. A seventh draft should typically be 45-55 pages in length, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point font, with 1-inch margins. Students are required to discuss the sixth draft, prior to submission, with their thesis chairs to ensure that both the student and the chair have the same expectations for what will be produced in this draft. Please submit the first draft to your committee and to Dr. Tendulkar via email and on Canvas.

1) **Cover Page:**

- Thesis Title
- “Seventh Draft Presented by [Student name in ALL CAPS]”
- Month and Year
- Names of your thesis chair and readers

2) **A complete background section (minimum of 40 citations) and research aims:** It is expected that students will have completed their literature review (a minimum of 40 sources) in this draft and incorporated any feedback from their committee. The background section should end with a statement of the research aims.

3) **A complete methods section (10 pages):** It is expected that students will have completed their methods section.

4) **A plan for analysis (5 pages):**

- c. For quantitative studies, a description of how all the key measures (e.g. outcomes, covariates etc.) will be constructed from the tools, how missing data will be handled, what statistical tests will be performed.
- d. For qualitative studies, a description of how the data is prepared for analysis (e.g. transcription, data familiarization process, coding, assessment of inter-rater reliability).

5) **Results including tables/figures:** Students should present a complete set of results, highlight any noteworthy findings, connect these findings back to the research aims and include labeled figures/charts if appropriate.

6) **A discussion section outline:** Students should outline a discussion section for their thesis. This outline should include:

- a. key findings
- b. briefly contextualize the findings in the existing literature (e.g., discuss whether the findings confirm or contradict what is currently known and how the research findings provide new insights)

7) **Reference List:** Include an updated list of references.

8) **Questions or Concerns:** Include 3-5 key comments/questions you have (e.g. challenges, methodological questions etc.) for the committee to consider related to the execution of the senior honors thesis

Community Health Senior Honors Thesis FINAL Draft

DUE: At least two weeks prior to the thesis defense

The outline below provides you with information on submitting the final draft of your thesis to your committee. This draft should be submitted no later than two weeks prior to your thesis defense. Your committee will review this draft as they prepare for your thesis defense. Please submit a CLEAN draft (no track changes, no comments, no unfinished sections). A final thesis draft is typically 60-90 pages in length, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point font, with 1-inch margins. This page count includes all components/ Students are required to discuss the final draft, prior to submission, with their thesis chairs to ensure that both the student and the chair have the same expectations for what will be produced in this final draft. Please submit the first draft via Canvas.

1) **Cover Page formatted as follows (centered justified):**

[Thesis Title]

A thesis submitted by [Student Name] in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Degree of Bachelor of Arts in Community Health

[Date of graduation – use month (February; May; or August) and year format]

[Name of Adviser/Examining Committee Chairperson and Reader]

- 2) **A table of contents:** Word has a table of contents tool you can use to autogenerate this
- 3) **An acknowledgements section:** (be sure to thank funders, committee members etc.)
- 4) **An abstract of your thesis:** A 250-word summary of your research. Do not include references; and summarize aims, methods, results and conclusions.
- 5) **A complete background section and research aims with APA in-text citations**
- 6) **A complete methods section**
- 7) **A complete analysis section**
- 8) **A complete results section including tables/figures**
- 9) **A complete discussion section including the implications of the research findings for the literature and limitations of the research.**
- 9) **A complete list of references**
- 10) **Appendices:** Include copies of data collection tools, IRB approval letters, data use agreements and any other relevant materials. Be sure to reference these appendices in the main body of your thesis

Staying motivated, healthy, and on track with your thesis!

- ✓ Remember that a senior honors thesis takes a *lot* of time and *lot* of effort. The more time you commit and the more proactive you are about communicating and seeking feedback, the more successful it will be.
- ✓ Prioritize your health (sleep, drink water, schedule physical activity, cut out non-essential obligations)
- ✓ Come to the thesis seminar regularly!
- ✓ Meet with your thesis chair regularly, *especially* when you are not making progress; your chair can help bring you back on track
- ✓ Meet with Dr. Tendulkar if you are struggling. She is invested in your success and can provide concrete support!
- ✓ Take a brief break from your thesis
- ✓ Ask for feedback from committee members and your peers
- ✓ Connect with resources on campus including Tisch librarians and the Academic Resource Center

Other Relevant Resources

1. Tufts University Thesis Webpage:

<http://students.tufts.edu/academic-advice-and-support/academic-advising/what-we-offer/senior-honors-thesis>

2. Tufts Academic Resource Center:

<http://students.tufts.edu/academic-advice-and-support/academic-resource-center>

3. Formatting and Style Guide:

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

4. Tufts University Library Link:

https://tufts-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/primo-explore/search?vid=01TUN&lang=en_US&sortby=rank

5. Undergraduate Research Fund:

https://www.google.com/search?q=undergraduate+research+fund&rlz=1C1NHXL_enUS710US710&coq=undergraduate+research+fund&aqs=chrome..69j57j0l5.5285j0j4&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8