

GUIDELINES FOR THE UNDERGRADUATE THESIS IN ANTHROPOLOGY

Introduction

The Department of Anthropology provides motivated undergraduate majors with an opportunity to conduct research and/or independent study on a topic of their choice and to write an Undergraduate Thesis formally presenting the results. The option of writing an Undergraduate Thesis is available to any undergraduate Anthropology major. In order to have the Undergraduate Thesis count as an Honors Thesis, you must meet the necessary requirements. The Department of Anthropology encourages students to do original research for the Undergraduate Thesis, but a substantial library-based synthesis of an important theme in Anthropology is sufficient. Undergraduates have many opportunities to get hands-on experience in Anthropology courses (in particular laboratory, field, computer, and Academically Based Community Service courses offered by the Department) or on research projects directed by Anthropology faculty, curators at the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (Penn Museum), researchers and staff, or advanced graduate students.

You choose the topic for the Undergraduate Thesis in consultation with a thesis advisor. Topics might include original research from anthropological fieldwork (for example: an archaeological field school in the US or abroad or applied work related to Academically Based Community Service courses), library research on a clearly defined topic, or objects from the collections of the Penn Museum. Your thesis can also be a substantially revised and expanded version of a term- or research paper written for a course in Anthropology or a closely related field (upon approval by the Undergraduate Thesis advisor). Your Undergraduate Thesis must incorporate an anthropological approach, perspective, methodology, and/or theory.

Undergraduate Thesis vs. Honors Thesis

Any Anthropology Major can write an Undergraduate Thesis. The Undergraduate Thesis is often called a “Senior Thesis.” An Honors Thesis is a particular category of Undergraduate Thesis. In order to graduate with Honors, you must have a GPA of 3.5 or above for all courses applied to your major and complete an Honors Thesis. You must register for one or both Undergraduate Thesis courses (Anthropology 300 in the Fall, Anthropology 301 in the Spring). For a regular Undergraduate Thesis, we recommend taking one or both Undergraduate Thesis courses although these are not required.

The Undergraduate Thesis Advisor

Once you've chosen to write an Undergraduate Thesis in Anthropology, you must find an Undergraduate Thesis advisor(s). This individual is distinct from your "primary academic advisor," but the same individual often serves both roles. In certain cases, you may have more than one advisor for the Undergraduate Thesis. The thesis advisor should be a faculty member of the Department of Anthropology (Full, Associate, Assistant, or Adjunct Professor). In special cases, you may petition the Undergraduate Chair to enlist a non-faculty advisor, including non-standing faculty members, faculty in other departments or schools, lecturers, Penn Museum staff, advanced graduate students, and the like, for the undergraduate thesis project. Your advisor will help you define and focus the thesis project and provide feedback during the various stages of research, analysis, interpretation, and writing of the thesis. For some research, multiple advisors may be necessary.

A faculty member may not be on campus at certain times of the year due to fieldwork, sabbatical leave, or other professional responsibilities. You should ask about your advisor's schedule in order to avoid any surprises.

Deadlines

Your thesis is due to the Department by the last day of classes in the Spring semester. However, if you'd like your thesis to be considered for the Undergraduate Thesis Prize in Anthropology, the deadline is mid-Spring semester. Consult the Undergraduate page of the Department of Anthropology website or contact the Undergraduate Program Coordinator (8-7461) for the exact date.

Although the Undergraduate Thesis is often referred to as a "senior thesis," we encourage you to define your research topic and find a faculty Undergraduate Thesis advisor by the end of Fall semester or the beginning of the Spring semester of your Junior year. You should do the field, library and/or laboratory research and the analysis of your data in the Summer semester following your Junior year or in the Fall semester of your Senior year. You should submit a draft of your thesis to your Undergraduate Thesis advisor by early or mid-Spring semester of the Senior year. We strongly recommend that you develop a formal schedule of due dates to which both you and your advisor agree.

You should budget sufficient time to submit the original draft and any necessary revised drafts of the thesis to your thesis advisor. Your advisor will provide editorial comments and suggestions on how to improve the thesis. You must provide at least one draft before filing the final version of the thesis. In the past, we've found that the best theses often were rewritten several times in consultation with the advisor.

The Department of Anthropology recommends the following timetable:

Late Fall semester or early Spring semester of the Junior year: Begin exploratory research, define your thesis topic, and find an Undergraduate Thesis advisor who is willing to supervise the project. For the Spring term of the Junior year, we encourage you to register for Anthropology 300: *The Undergraduate Thesis*.

Mid-Spring semester of Junior year or early Fall semester of the Senior year: Finish the basic library, field, or laboratory work related to your thesis project. Submit a formal Abstract (summary) and Detailed Outline of the Undergraduate Thesis project to your Undergraduate Thesis advisor and begin analysis of the data and writing. For the Fall term of the Senior year, we encourage you to register for Anthropology 301: *The Undergraduate Thesis*; however, you are not required to take the Undergraduate Thesis courses unless you are graduating with Honors.

End of Fall semester of the Senior year: Submit a first draft of the thesis to your thesis advisor.

Spring semester of the Senior year: We encourage you to submit a revised draft (or if necessary, drafts) to your thesis advisor.

Midway through Spring semester of the Senior year: Submit the final version of your Undergraduate Thesis to be considered for the Department of Anthropology prize and University-wide prizes.

Last day of classes, Spring semester: Submit the final version of your undergraduate thesis.

Please note that there are advantages to completing your Undergraduate Thesis by the end of the Fall semester of the Senior year. If you're applying to graduate or professional school, post-graduation jobs, or internships, you should consider submitting a complete or near complete version of your thesis by mid-Fall of the Senior year. Having completed (or nearly completed) an original thesis project may improve your chances for admission to graduate or professional programs or establishing a career. The due dates for most graduate or professional schools, graduate scholarships, and internships are mid to late Fall. A completed or near complete Undergraduate Thesis can be emphasized in your letters of application and faculty members' letters of recommendation, thereby increasing your chances of success.

Writing Multiple Theses or Single Thesis for Multiple Departments or Schools

Many anthropology majors who are double majoring consider writing two Undergraduate Theses. An Undergraduate Thesis cannot be submitted for credit to two or more departments or programs. In rare cases, under special agreement between the Undergraduate Thesis advisor and Undergraduate Chair in the Department of

Anthropology and equivalent individuals in another department or school, you may petition to use your library or research data (or data set) for two separate Undergraduate Theses, provided that your individual theses are framed within the theory and methods of the individual disciplines and/or departments. We encourage you to read the section “Multiple Submission” (Item D) in the “Code of Academic Integrity” (<http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/osl/acadint.html>).

Use of Previously Written Term- or Research Paper for an Undergraduate Thesis

As mentioned above, your thesis may also be a substantially revised and expanded version of a term or research paper written for a course in Anthropology or a closely related field (upon approval by your Undergraduate Thesis advisor and the professor for whose course you wrote the original paper). However, keep in mind that your thesis must incorporate an anthropological approach, perspective, methodology, and/or theory. Please read the University’s Code of Academic Integrity at the following web address carefully: <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/osl/acadint.html>

The Components of an Undergraduate Thesis

An Undergraduate Thesis should minimally include the following:

- Title Page (separate page)
- Abstract (separate page)
- Text (separate section)
- References Cited (separate section)

We recommend including the following sections, although this structure may not be appropriate for all Undergraduate Theses. The section titles can be altered to best reflect your content. You may also want to include sub-sections within these main sections.

- Title Page (separate page)
- Abstract (separate page)
- Table of Contents (separate page) [optional]
- Table of Figures, Table of Tables [optional]
- Introduction
- Background to the Research Problem (the intellectual framework)
- Research Design or Methodology
- Results (the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the data)
- Discussion
- Conclusions
- Endnotes (separate section)
- References Cited (separate section)
- Tables (separate section)
- Figures (separate section)

Useful sources on formal writing include the following:

Gibaldi, Joseph. 2003. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 6th ed. New York: Modern Language Association of America. A comprehensive guide to writing research papers.

Strunk, W. and E.B. White. 2005. *The Elements of Style*. New York: Penguin Press. Appropriate for more humanities-oriented papers (and therefore possibly for cultural- and linguistic anthropology theses). Focuses on rules of standard English and calls attention to common errors.

Turabian, Kate L. 1996. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 6th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Updated in accordance with the *Chicago Manual of Style*.

University of Chicago. 2003. *The Chicago Manual of Style*. 15th edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Another classic, comprehensive style guide; extensively revised for the 15th edition.

If you would like feedback and support while writing, the Writing Center, located at 3808 Walnut Street, is an excellent resource. Consult the Writing Center web page: http://writing.upenn.edu/critical/help_tips.html#style. You will find links to guides on writing for most purposes, as well as a section with links devoted specifically to writing Anthropology papers.

As described on their web site, “The Penn Writing Center offers friendly, expert writing help to Penn undergraduate and graduate students. All of our tutors are trained to help you write with greater skill and confidence. They will show you how to: proofread your own papers, identify patterns of error and how to correct them, define your topic and audience, plan research strategies, develop a sound thesis, analyze texts, organize material and revise drafts, [and] cultivate a distinct and masterful writing voice” (<http://www.writing.upenn.edu/critical/help/>).

You can find information on Writing Center tutoring hours at: http://www.writing.upenn.edu/critical/help/wc_ugrad.html

Thesis Page Length

There is no set page length for the Undergraduate Thesis in Anthropology. Since the goal of the Undergraduate Thesis is a formal presentation of a research topic, your thesis must show evidence of substantial research on an issue or problem in Anthropology. In past years, Undergraduate Theses have ranged from 20 pages to 120 pages.

Style Guide

You should use consistent style for your in-text citations, references cited, and writing in general. All Undergraduate Theses submitted to the Department of Anthropology must use the formal “style guide.” We recommend the *American Anthropologist* for cultural anthropology and linguistics topics, *American Antiquity* and *Historical Archaeology* for archaeology topics, and *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* for physical anthropology and biological anthropology topics. You must use the style guide consistently for the Abstract, Main Text, References Cited, Figures, and Tables. All citations must have the complete reference in the section “References Cited.” All figures must be numbered and must be referred to in the text at least once. On-line style guides are available for the following journals:

American Anthropologist:

http://www.aaanet.org/pubs/style_guide.htm

American Antiquity:

<http://www.saa.org/Publications/StyleGuide/styframe.html>

Historical Archaeology

http://www.sha.org/Publications/ha_style.htm

American Journal of Physical Anthropology:

<http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/jabout/28130/ForAuthors.html>

Page Numbering

All pages in your thesis should be numbered at the bottom center using Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3 . . .) (including Main Text, References Cited section, Figures section, and Tables section). The Title page is not numbered. Any preliminary pages (Abstract, Table of Contents, or lists of Figures) use small Roman numerals (i, ii, iii . . .).

Title Page

Your title page should follow the format given below. All text of the title page should have the same font as the main text. The text should be centered on the page. This page is not numbered. Your title page should have the following elements (note the use of upper and lower case):

[TITLE OF THE UNDERGRADUATE THESIS IN UPPER CASE]

By

[Author's Name]

In

Anthropology

Submitted to the
Department of Anthropology
University of Pennsylvania

Thesis Advisor: [name of the Thesis Advisor]

[Year]

Abstract

The Undergraduate Thesis must include a formal abstract (summary) of 100-200 words at the beginning, immediately following your Title page. Your thesis abstract presents a concise summary of the thesis (research problem or issue, the methods or approach used, and results). The abstract section is not paginated. Do not cite references in the abstract.

Endnotes

We strongly discourage the use of footnotes and endnotes for “additional information.” If necessary, use endnotes rather than footnotes. Endnotes should be numbered in sequence in the text (using a superscript font) and appear in sequence at the end of the main text as a separate section titled “Endnotes.” Endnotes are single-spaced with double spaces between them and should include proper indent formatting. Do not use footnotes or endnotes for citing references (see References Cited below). See the appropriate style guides for details.

In-Text Citations

It is better to over-cite your sources than to under-cite them! Below are links to the Penn Library’s documentation guide and the Office of Student Life’s statement on academic integrity. Please read these documents carefully:

<http://gethelp.library.upenn.edu/PORT/documentation/www.upenn.edu/osl/acadint/html>

For citation examples, please refer to the following Penn Library web page:

http://gethelp.library.upenn.edu/PORT/documentation/documentation_styles

References Cited

Your Undergraduate Thesis should include a complete “References Cited” section (please note that this is not a “Bibliography”). The proper format for your citations is “in text” (in-text parenthetical citations), not as footnotes or endnotes. Refer to the appropriate style guide (*American Anthropologist*, *American Antiquity*, *Historical Archaeology*, or *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*) above for details on citations. Your References Cited section must include all and only the references that you’ve formally cited in your main text, endnotes, figures, and tables.

Graphics, Figures, Illustrations, and Tables

You should label all figures, photographs, drawings, graphics, illustrations, and maps as “Figure [number]” in a numbered sequence (refer to the appropriate style guide above). Label all of your tables “Table [number]” in a numbered sequence (a separate sequence from “Figures”). You should mention each figure and table at least once in your text [for example: “In 1973, excavations were conducted on the west side of Mound B (Figure 7)” or “As Table 5 demonstrates, the alcoholic content of maize beer is low.”] Use “(Figure 7)” or “(Table 5)”; do not use “(see Figure 7)” or “(see Table 5).” Your style guide may also be helpful.

The Undergraduate Thesis in Anthropology is a formal document, so your figures and tables should be sharp, clear, readable and directly relevant to the topic. We recommend that each figure or table appear on a separate page of your thesis. Do not integrate your figures or tables between blocks of text. We also recommend that all figures and tables be placed after your main text and References Cited section. You must have an individual caption for each figure or table at the foot of the page on which it appears. Your captions must be properly formatted and in the same font type and font size as the main text. You must include formal citations in your captions and References Cited section for any figures and tables that you use from the published or unpublished works of others (for example: “Figure 3: Location map showing the excavations completed during the 1994 field season (after Smith et al. 1995).”

Your figures should be clear and legible. You can reproduce images from publications using a copy machine; reduce or enlarge these to best fit the margins of your page. Avoid including oversized figures (larger than those that can be included within the required margins of a regular 8 ½ x 11” page). You can xerographically or digitally reduce most oversized images to fit a normal page. If you must include oversized images, fold them to page size. You may use “White-Out” to “clean up” your images. You can print captions directly on your images or tape them to the image with clear tape. Graphics and drawing programs such as Adobe Photoshop[®] and Adobe Illustrator[®] can be useful for enhancing and customizing scanned images and creating drawings.

Photographs are considered “figures” and are numbered in the figure sequence. If you include photographs, they should be sharp, fit within the required margins, and have direct relevance to your thesis. Each photograph must have a caption and must be cited in the text at least once. Photographs that you copy from published or unpublished works must include citations to the original sources in the captions [for example: “Figure 35: A panorama view of the Amazon River near Belem, Brazil (after Lathrap 1970: Figure 7)”. We recommend that you use high quality xerographic copies, laser prints, or inkjet prints from scanned images of photographs in place of original photographs.

Margins, Line Spacing, and Fonts

Use a word-processor for your thesis and print it on a good-quality printer. The text, tables and figures of your thesis should minimally have a 1-inch margin on all sides (top, bottom, right and left). Double-space your entire text, except for the Title Page, Abstract, Table of Contents, long quoted passages (“block” quotes), References Cited, Endnotes and Captions. Format these sections according to the style guide used.

Use the same font throughout your document. We recommend a standard (regular, non-bold) font such as Times New Roman. Use a 12-point font size with proportional spacing.

Number of Copies Required

Submit two copies of your thesis to the Department of Anthropology (one copy for the faculty advisor and one for the Department of Anthropology file). Both copies should be original or high quality xerographic copies. Covers and/or ring binding for the thesis are optional, but may be useful if your thesis is long. At the very least, secure each copy of your thesis with a “binder clip” or a staple of appropriate size.

Funding Sources for Undergraduate Research

The School of Arts and Sciences administers a number of competitive grants for undergraduate research. These funds can offset costs involved in doing research and analysis related to the Undergraduate Thesis in Anthropology. Detailed information on funding sources for undergraduate research is available through the Center for Undergraduate Research and Fellowships, Art Casciato, Director (arthurc@english.upenn.edu). The Center website may be accessed at <http://www.upenn.edu/curf>.

In addition, information on research opportunities may also be available on the Ben Franklin Scholars web page (<http://www.upenn.edu/curf/bfs/spring04.html>) and the University of Pennsylvania Guide to Fellowships, Scholarships, and Grants page (<http://www.college.upenn.edu/honors/fellowships.html>), which has links to web pages for the following grants and awards:

Nassau Fund

The Effect Project for Undergraduate Research

College Research Grants Program

General Honors Summer Research Funding

College Alumni Society Summer Research Grants

University Scholars Program

Association of Alumnae Scholars Award (limited to “female members of the Junior class”)

The Department of Anthropology Undergraduate Thesis Prize

Each year the Department of Anthropology awards a prize for the best Undergraduate Thesis. A special committee made up of members of the Anthropology faculty will judge the submitted theses based on writing ability, originality of research, clear presentation of the problem or issue, research design, methodology, theoretical framework, and interpretation. Most of the previous awardees based their theses on original primary research rather than secondary research or library-based research.

University-wide Awards for Completed Undergraduate Research Projects

The Undergraduate Thesis advisor, undergraduate advisor, and/or the Department of Anthropology Undergraduate Chair may also nominate Undergraduate Theses in Anthropology for awards such as the Rose Award for Undergraduate Research. Detailed information on awards given for undergraduate research can be found on the University of Pennsylvania Guide to Fellowships, Scholarships, and Grants page: <http://www.college.upenn.edu/honors/fellowships.html>.

Rose Award for Undergraduate Research: The Rose Award honors outstanding research by undergraduate students and the faculty who advise them. Only completed research projects are eligible. The nomination is by the faculty advisor. Application forms are available from the Undergraduate Dean or online as a Word document at: <http://www.upenn.edu/curf/research/rose.html>.

[This document was prepared by Clark Erickson in 1998 and revised by Erickson and Kristin Cahn von Seelen in Spring of 2006.]