

SENIOR THESIS CHECKLIST

The senior thesis will be an independent investigation of a carefully defined research topic. This topic will be selected and developed by the student with support of the faculty advisor. Students will pose hypotheses regarding the research topic and will design and execute experiments to test these hypotheses. The results of these experiments will be communicated in an oral presentation and written thesis. In short, the senior thesis will be substantially more than the writing of a long paper in a course. It provides an opportunity for the student to integrate all aspects of his or her academic experience to develop new knowledge in a selected field of biological sciences.

REQUIREMENTS: You must complete all required coursework for the major, have a minimum GPA of 3.0, and consent of the Assistant Director for Undergraduate Studies and a faculty thesis advisor. In addition, you will also need to take:

- **BSC290** or **BSC 299** (a *minimum* of 3 credits are required)
- **BSC 303** (taken during the senior year)

Students wishing to graduate with School Honors must complete a senior thesis, but completion of a senior thesis is not sufficient for obtaining School Honors.

TIMELINE: The timeline below provides a general outline to complete the thesis starting during the junior year. Students may start undergraduate research sooner than their junior year.

Junior year (or before):

- Select a Thesis Advisor & select a research topic
 - For help, check the biological sciences website or the Undergraduate Advisor
 - Tell the faculty member you plan on completing a senior thesis
 - Prepare a research proposal in consultation with your faculty thesis advisor
- Sign up for BSC 290/299 (1-3 hours/semester)

Senior year (or before):

- Register for BSC 303 (1 hour) during the semester that you plan to write and defend your senior thesis
 - Registration in BSC 303 requires approval of the Assistant Director for Undergraduate Studies, and completion of at least 3 credits of either BSC 290 or BSC 299.
- Register for more 290/299 hours if desired
 - Note: only 4 hours of 290/299 may be counted toward major requirements, extra hours will count toward University total number of hours needed for graduation

- Within the first three weeks of classes in the semester you sign up for BSC 303, you should form your committee.
 - Your committee consists of your thesis advisor and one or more additional faculty members.
 - The thesis committee will serve as an additional scientific resource, read and evaluate your thesis and listen to an oral presentation of your thesis.
 - Present your proposal to your committee and the course coordinator.
- By the 8th week of classes, you should prepare a draft of your thesis
 - Use the guidelines for Master's theses
 - Present the draft to the course coordinator and the faculty advisor
 - This will take several weeks to prepare! Your thesis advisor will help you!
- By the 14th week of classes
 - Present the thesis as a poster at a department or university research symposium or as an oral presentation
 - Two popular options for presentation venues are the Phi Sigma Research Symposium and the Undergraduate Research Symposium, both are held during the spring semester. Other options include the BEES, MCB, or Neuroscience brown-bag seminars.
 - Submit a final draft of the written thesis to the thesis committee
- By the 15th week of classes
 - Defend the thesis to the committee in an oral presentation
- By the last week of classes
 - Present a signed copy of your final thesis to the department