



**MONMOUTH
UNIVERSITY**

HONORS SCHOOL

**Thesis/Capstone
Requirements and Procedures**

REVISED SUMMER 2023

**HO 296 Thesis/Capstone Preparation (1 credit)
HO 396 Thesis/Capstone Proposal (2 credits)
HO 496 Thesis/ Capstone Completion (2 credits)**

I. THE HONORS RESEARCH THESIS AND CREATIVE CAPSTONE

A. WHY WRITE AN HONORS THESIS OR DO A CAPSTONE PROJECT? ¹

Pursue Your Academic Passion

An alum of MU's Honors School commented that the honors thesis should be called the "Honors Student's Passion Project." The honors thesis and creative capstone offers you (the student) the opportunity to own your education, ask unique questions, solve problems, and contribute to larger bodies of research or study. The Honors School encourages you to explore topics both within and outside your major and minor areas of study, as long as you meet four criteria:

- You are passionate about the selected topic
- You have college coursework in the selected area of study
- You have a full-time professor with whom to work independently
- Your project is "do-able" given the time, materials, and other necessary resources available to you

Develop Transferable Skills

Regardless of your career path, the process of developing and crafting a feasible research/capstone project will hone skills that will serve you well in almost any future job. Writing an honors thesis/capstone demonstrates your ability to:

- ask challenging questions
- acquire the investigative skills needed to find answers
- navigate libraries, laboratories, archives, databases, and other research venues
- be flexible throughout comprehensive projects as your thesis/capstone is sure to twist and turn
- master the art of time management
- hone your analytic and argumentation skills
- organize a lengthy piece of writing or project
- orally communicate and present your work to potential clients and peers

Work Closely with Faculty Mentors

Your honors thesis/capstone offers the opportunity to work one-on-one with at least one, and sometimes two, faculty mentors. These faculty can enrich your intellectual development and possibly serve as invaluable references for graduate school and employment.

Explore Future Professions

An honors thesis/capstone will allow you to learn more about a particular field of interest. Learning through your thesis/capstone might help you decide whether (or not) to pursue that field in graduate school or in your future career.

¹ Information on "Why write an honors thesis?" is borrowed and adapted from The Writing Center at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill <https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/honors-theses/>

B. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A RESEARCH THESIS AND CAPSTONE PROJECT?

Both a research thesis and capstone project offer students the ability to envision, plan, and construct their own honors experience. Both can vary in form, content, and process. Both demand a high level of scholarship, intellectual engagement, careful documentation, long-range planning, and time commitment. Honors students engaging in such work must place their project within a scholarly context in the field or craft, and reflect on the vision, process, and goals involved in shaping the thesis/capstone experience.

Research Thesis

The honors research thesis is a substantial investigation of original thinking that offers students the opportunity to develop a carefully defined research question that can be answered by conducting empirical or extensive library research. Students who conduct a research thesis answer a specific question by conducting quantitative, qualitative, laboratory, experimental, analytic, and/or library research.

The structure and process of conducting an honors research thesis often mirrors the research process using a positivistic model that students might encounter in conducting research in a graduate program. Such a model includes the construction of a unique research question, theoretical framework, literature review, and methodology, as well as the collection, analysis, and discussion of the data.

Some research theses follow a library thesis model instead of a positivistic model. Unlike the literature review that students write for HO 396 to serve as background for an empirical study or creative project, the library thesis is grounded in a stand-alone review that comprises the core work of the thesis. The stand-alone review conducted for a library thesis is meant to exist as its own contribution to scholarly knowledge, can serve as a valuable overview of a topic, and can have very real-world implications.²

NOTE: Students who will be including human subjects in their research will need to apply for and receive Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval.

Creative Capstone

The Honors School encourages creative capstone projects that allow students to present their completed work in a form other than the standard written thesis model.³ An honors capstone project consists of a combination of secondary research and creative work where the primary outcome can be a non-written or written creative endeavor that is grounded in scholarly research.

² This information is borrowed and adapted from [Guidance on Conducting a Systematic Literature Review - Yu Xiao, Maria Watson, 2019 \(sagepub.com\)](#)

³ Information on the capstone project is borrowed and adapted from both James Madison University <https://www.jmu.edu/honors/handbook/creative-projects.shtml> and Barrett Honors College at Arizona State University: <https://barretthonors.asu.edu/thesis/guidebook>

Creative projects include but are not limited to:

- learning units, curriculum, professional development workshops
- interactive or other new media, digital film, website designs, print media
- music recitals or curated art exhibits
- production of original art such as painting, photography, sculpture, musical or literary composition
- dance or theatrical performances
- screenplays or works of fiction
- computer games or other computerized projects
- business analyses and case studies

NOTE: In addition to producing the creative project, capstone projects involve writing, both in the initial proposal through HO 396 and through a reflective/contextual essay in HO 496.

C. WHAT SEQUENCE OF COURSES DO STUDENTS NEED TO TAKE FOR SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE THESIS/CAPSTONE?

To graduate from the Monmouth University (MU) Honors School, students must complete an honors thesis/capstone project, conducted over three semesters of coursework (HO 296, HO 396, and HO 496). Drawing on coursework in any area of interest in which MU offers faculty expertise, students will demonstrate the capacity to 1) organize and conduct advanced undergraduate-level research, **or** 2) design and implement an advanced undergraduate-level project in pursuit of solving an important problem or creating new knowledge in a particular field of study. The Honors School thesis/capstone project is intended to challenge students to draw on their intellectual passions, expand on what they have learned in classes, and create a unique and innovative project to showcase as they move forward in their careers.

To successfully complete the thesis/capstone project, the progression for honors students is:

1. HO 296 Thesis/Capstone Preparation (1 credit)

To register for HO 296, honors students should have completed at least 30 credits and must have a minimum overall GPA of 3.3.

HO 296 runs as a seminar class where students meet in the classroom once per week with the professor. Students should plan on taking HO 296 during their sophomore year, although they may take it in their junior year if necessary. Students should register for HO 296 as they would any other course. During the course, students will explore possible research areas or scholarly endeavors, learn to identify relevant scholarly sources, write a literature review, identify possible faculty mentors, consider appropriate research methodologies, and learn about the remaining thesis/capstone process that they will undertake in HO 396 and HO 496.

2. *HO 396 Honors Thesis/Capstone Proposal* (2 credits)

To register for HO 396, honors students should have completed at least 60 credits and must have a minimum overall GPA of 3.3, as well as have received a B or higher in HO 296.

HO 396 is the course in which students formally develop their thesis/project proposals under the direction of at least one full-time professor (first reader) and possible additional professor (second reader) with expertise in the student's area(s) of interest related to the anticipated project. The first reader must be a full-time faculty member; the second reader can be an adjunct professor or administrator.

HO 396 runs as an independent study, so students must pace themselves, arrange regular meetings with their reader(s), and keep track of their progress. HO 396 involves the student writing an introduction, a theory section (if relevant), a literature review drawing on at least 25 scholarly sources, and a detailed and comprehensive methods section that maps out how they will conduct their research (for a research thesis) or complete their project (for a creative capstone project). See Section F below for details.

3. *HO 496 Thesis/Capstone Completion* (2 credits) (required for all honors students)

To register for HO 496, honors students must have a minimum overall GPA of 3.3 and must have received a B or higher in HO 396. Students who have earned an HO 396 grade of B- or below should request permission from the Honors School Dean to retake HO 396.

In HO 496, honors students complete their thesis/capstone culminating with a presentation at the Honors School Research Conference. See Section H for further details.

Similar to HO 396, students must work with a first reader who must be a full-time professor, and as needed, a second reader who can be an adjunct professor or administrator. Like HO 396, HO 496 runs as an independent study, so students must pace themselves, arrange regular meetings with their reader(s), and keep track of their progress. The content and structure of the work students complete in HO 496 depends on whether students are conducting research theses or completing creative capstone projects (see Section H below for details).

Important Notes

NOTE 1: Education, Medical Laboratory Science and Clinical Lab Science majors, students in BA+MA programs, and students who plan on graduating early should complete HO 296 in their sophomore year, and HO 396 and HO 496 by the end of their junior year, leaving senior year for student teaching, lab work, and/or graduate-level classes.

NOTE 2: Students who are not enrolled in the Honors School may be eligible to take HO 296, 396, and 496 as free elective credits. Such students must request permission of the Honors School Dean and have academic qualifications comparable to those of current Honors School students entering each course.

NOTE 3: Students are strongly encouraged to submit an abstract of their papers/projects to undergraduate conferences, including the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC), the Northeast Regional Honors Council (NRHC), the National Conferences on Undergraduate Research (NCUR), as well as Monmouth's Scholarship Week, so that they can present their research at those academic meetings. To learn more and find the deadlines, please visit their webpages and/or contact the Honors School staff:

- [National Collegiate Honors Council \(NCHC\)](#)
- [Northeast Regional Honors Council Sociological Society \(NRHC\)](#)
- [National Conferences on Undergraduate Research](#)
- [Monmouth University Scholarship Week](#)

NOTE 4: With the support of their first or second readers, students may choose to submit their work to scholarly journals. The number and variety of scholarly venues are immense, and students should consult with their first reader to determine if the quality of a thesis/ project rises to the level of publication and if so, the possible venues to which to submit a revised or expanded version of the research thesis/capstone project.

One possible publication that students might consider is [Illuminate](#), the publication of the Northeast Regional Honors Council.

NOTE 5: For students whose conference proposals or journal articles are accepted, a waiver of 1 upper-level Honors credit may be available. Consult the Honors School office for more details.

D. HO 396 AND HO 496 STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Application Process

- *Weeks 1-3:* Students should start working on their theses/capstones right away! During these first few weeks, students also need to review the HO 396 or HO 496 application eform from Etrieve and meet with their first reader and second reader (if applicable) to discuss their proposed thesis or capstone project. If students need guidance on this process, they should visit the Honors School for help as soon as possible and as often as needed!
- *Week 4:* By the end of week 4, students should have filled out the HO 396 or HO 496 eform and forwarded it to the Honors School for signatures and processing with the final review and approval from the Honors School Dean.
- **NOTE 1: All students must have filled out the eform prior to midterms. Otherwise they will receive a failing midterm grade.**

- **NOTE 2: If students have not submitted the eform prior to the withdrawal date, the Honors School will automatically withdraw the student from the class.**

2. Meetings with the Readers, Advisor, and Dean

- First Reader: Students should meet with their first reader at least every other week, and schedule additional meetings as needed. Many students have found meeting weekly with their first reader very helpful.
- Meetings with the Second Reader: Students who have second readers should meet with their second reader at least three times during the semester, adding additional meetings as needed.
- Meeting with the Honors School Dean and Assistant Dean: Students should meet with the Honors School Dean and Assistant Dean as needed to help support their progress throughout the honors thesis/capstone process. **If students do not know what they want to study, which professors they want to work with, or any other challenges, they need to meet with the dean early and often!**
- IRB/IACUC Approval: When applicable, students must secure approval of the
 - [IACUC](#) for any research involving vertebrate laboratory animals
 - [IRB](#) for any research involving human subjects
- Hardware/Software Connection Needs: Students requiring any new hardware or software to be connected to the university network must contact the Helpdesk/Information Management.
- Midterm Draft Submission: Students must submit an initial draft of their proposal (for HO 396) or final thesis/project (for HO 496) by the end of Week 9 of the semester to their reader(s) and the Honors Dean and Assistant Dean.
- Final Draft Submission: Students must submit the final draft of their proposal (for HO 396) or final thesis/project (for HO 496) by the end of Week 13 of the semester to their reader(s) and the Honors Dean and Assistant Dean.

NOTE 1: Students should format the midterm and final draft following a current professional format in the discipline or department most closely related to the thesis/capstone. Students should confirm with their first reader which professional document format should be used and what citation style they should be using.

NOTE 2: For both the proposal and final thesis/project, students should include a title/cover page with the following information centered on the page:

Proposal Title
 Student's Name
 HO 396 Thesis/Capstone Proposal OR
 HO 496 Thesis/Capstone Completion

Honors School
Monmouth University
Date
First Reader's Name, First Reader
Second Reader's Name, Second Reader

E. ROLES OF THE HO 396 AND HO 496 READERS AND ADVISOR

1. The Role of the First Reader

For HO 396 and HO 496, the first reader is the instructor of record who directs the student's work on the proposal and thesis/project. The first reader should be a full-time faculty member knowledgeable in the area of the student's thesis/project. The first reader receives a stipend according to the FAMCO Agreement and is primarily responsible for:

- Collaborating with the student to complete and signing the HO 396/HO 496 application eform during the first week of the semester
- Meeting with the student at least twice a month to discuss and encourage progress
- Guiding the student in developing the scope of their research and approach
- Recommending to the student pertinent methods, materials, and scholarship
- Reviewing and commenting on the student's draft, submitted in Week 9
- Reviewing and commenting on the student's final version, submitted in Week 13
- Determining and submitting the student's midterm and final grades

2. The Role of the Second Reader

For HO 396 and HO 496, students may choose to ask a second professor to serve as Second Reader. The Second Reader is a professor who has expertise in some aspect of a student's thesis/project. The second reader receives a stipend according to the FAMCO Agreement and is primarily responsible for:

- Reviewing and signing the submitted HO 396/HO 496 application eform by the second week of the semester
- Meeting with the student at least three times during the semester to discuss and encourage progress
- Reviewing and commenting on the student's draft, submitted in Week 9
- Reviewing and commenting on the student's final version, submitted in Week 13
- Assisting with determining the student's midterm and final grades if requested by the first reader

F. HO 396: COMPONENTS OF THE THESIS/CAPSTONE PROPOSAL

The completed proposal is an important part of the thesis/project process and acts as a blueprint and foundation for the final thesis/project. For both research theses and capstone projects, the proposal should contain the following sections:

1. Abstract

The abstract should briefly summarize the thesis statement or statement of problem, why the research question or project purpose is important, a brief description of theory and methods, and the expectations for the proposed research/project. The abstract should be between 150-200 words in length.

2. Introduction and Thesis Statement

The introduction and thesis statement identify the area of proposed research and its significance, and should include the following:

- **Area of proposed research:** This subsection states the proposed thesis/capstone topic, the main idea, hypothesis, or problem statement, and supporting points or reasons.
- **Significance:** Students must answer the big “So what?” question. Why is this research important or relevant? Why should anyone care about the question the work is trying to answer or the problem the work is trying to solve?
- **Evidence:** What evidence (often supported by scholarly literature) justifies completing this project? Is there an obvious knowledge gap? Students should discuss how the proposed research or project is positioned within, contributes to, and relates to existing scholarship and/or previous work.

3. Theory Section (optional)

For certain academic disciplines, a solid thesis/capstone is based upon a strong theoretical perspective or perspectives that drive(s) the research question, methodology, analysis, and conclusion. For those disciplines grounded in theory, students should work with their first and/or second reader(s) to select the theory or theories that best help them frame their research question. The theory section should

- Explain the theory/theories you are using
- State why you selected that theory/theories to guide your research
- Explain how your chosen theory/theories connects to your topic

4. Literature Review

The literature review is NOT an annotated bibliography! The literature review serves as background for an empirical study or capstone project by providing an overview of previously conducted and published scholarly research pertinent to the proposed thesis/project. The literature review demonstrates students’ understanding about and knowledge of central themes or arguments in a scholarly body, and that students are able to make connections among scholarly sources. The literature review should:

- Identify and be organized around patterns/themes/central arguments in the field of scholarship
- Indicate how those themes inform the thesis/capstone main question.

- Please note that a pattern/theme is not a single source. Rather, a pattern/theme is a recurrent specific argument the student observes in multiple scholarly sources. A body paragraph should state a pattern, present or summarize which sources articulate that pattern, and explain how the proposed thesis will respond to the pattern by using it in some way.
- A “pattern” consisting of only one source should very much be the exception rather than the rule and is exceptional, making a unique but important argument in the scholarship.
- Include at least 25 scholarly (peer-reviewed) sources.

NOTE: For students working on creative capstones, sometimes determining the focus of a literature review can be confusing. The focus of the review should be on the subject matter or focus of the project. Students can then use the literature review to ground their project in this secondary research. Below is a chart of some examples of what literature to review for sample creative capstone projects:

Type of Project	Project Topic/Aim	Focus of Literature Review
Mobile App	Fitness Tracking	Review literature on the metrics needed to maintain optimal: weight, cardio level, etc.
Novel	Journey of migrants from Central America to US	Review Literature on migrant journeys, evaluation of US immigration policies, including tracking technologies, the influence of NGOs in migration process, etc.
Film	Impact of sea level rise in coastal New Jersey	Review literature on the causes of sea level rise, impact of sea level rise, coastal regions, coastal New Jersey, etc.

5. Research Methods/Methods of Problem Solving

This section provides an overview of selected research methods. The Methods section should map out in a detailed manner the specific steps that students will be taking in HO 496 to complete their research or project. The methods section should include:

- The research methodology stating the scholarly method(s) and/or research design that the proposed thesis/project will employ. In other words, students must explain how they will be answering their research question, solving the problem their project addresses, or completing their creative projects.
- The research or project data/resources students will be collecting or upon which they will be drawing to conduct their research or carry out their projects. This section may include scholarly databases, peer-reviewed sources, web-based materials, questionnaires or surveys, interviews, policy, or any other related materials/information.

NOTE: For students writing a library thesis, the methods section should include a discussion of

- The bodies of literature from which the student will draw their sources.
- How the student will select the sources to include in the library analysis
- The tools the student will use to search for relevant literature

6. Reference Page/Works Cited

The reference page should list all of the works (scholarly and otherwise) that students referenced or relied upon to write their proposal. Students should confer with their first reader to determine the citation style used in the discipline most closely related to their field of study.

7. Appendix (optional)

Students may append to the proposal other materials as appropriate, such as but not limited to drafted portions of the thesis, annotated bibliography entries of non-scholarly/non-peer-reviewed sources found to be pertinent to the thesis, reproductions of materials to be included in a portfolio, documentation that the questionnaire or survey was approved by a review board, or professional correspondence pertaining to the project.

G. HO 496: COMPONENTS OF THE RESEARCH THESIS/PROJECT COMPLETION

Students should write their abstracts, introductions, and conclusions so that their thesis/project is understandable by a general audience. Any educated reader should be able to read the abstract, introduction, and conclusion and be able to understand the topic, approach, and conclusions of the paper/project.

The structure of the final thesis/capstone project will depend on whether students are completing an empirical research thesis, library thesis, or capstone project. This section outlines these three types of work.

1. Empirical Research Thesis

For the final thesis, students should include all of their work from HO 396, but change the wording from present or future tense (e.g., “For this project, I will research...”) to past tense (e.g., “For this project, I researched...”). Students should also update any sections in which they made changes during their research/project completion phase. Often times, researchers need to tweak the methods they use or even the question they set out to ask. Final projects should reflect those changes.

The final research thesis should include ALL of the sections below. Indicated with an asterisk is the work students completed in HO 396 but updated as needed for HO 496. Indicated in italics is new work completed in HO 496.

- Abstract*
- Introduction and Thesis Statement*
- Theory Section (if relevant)*
- Literature Review*
- Research Methods/Methods of Problem Solving*
- *Findings/Results*

The findings/results section presents the data and summarizes the student’s observations and findings. This section should contain tables, figures, or

other visuals, as well as verbiage that summarizes the main findings and reveals any trends the student has found. Students should avoid interpreting the data in this section; this section is for reporting on what the student found, but not analyzing those findings.

- *Discussion*

The discussion section is the space for students to offer their interpretations of the findings/results. In this section, students should address the following questions:

- How do your results relate to the objectives of the study?
- How do your results relate to the results of your expected outcome stated in your proposal?
- How do your results relate to the results that might have been expected from background information based on the theory and previous empirical research discussed in the literature review?
- Do your results agree with or argue against the hypothesis?

- *Conclusion*

In the concluding section, students should include

- A brief discussion of what they wanted the reader to have learned, how the study contributes knowledge to the field, and any implications or applications of the study
 - Changes they made in the study or a discussion of the implications of the findings related to any new hypotheses that might now be formulated and tested with further research as a result of the student's work
 - Limitations of the study
 - Suggestions for future research
- Reference Page/Works Cited* (with added sources from HO 496)
 - Appendix (optional)*

2. Library Thesis

For the final library thesis, students should include their work from HO 396, but change the wording from present or future tense (e.g., "For this project, I will research...") to past tense (e.g., "For this project, I researched..."). Students should also update any sections in which they made changes during their research/project completion phase. Often times, researchers need to tweak the methods they use or even the question they set out to ask. Final projects should reflect those changes.

The final library thesis should include the components below, organized in a manner that allows for a clear flow to the thesis. Students should discuss the organization with their reader(s). Indicated with an asterisk is the work students completed in HO 396 but updated as needed for HO 496. Indicated in italics is new work completed in HO 496.

- Abstract*
- Introduction and Thesis Statement*
- Theory Section (if relevant)*
- Research Methods/Methods of Problem Solving*

- *Stand-Alone Literature Review*

The stand-alone literature review should:

- incorporate the literature from HO 396 and **add at least 20 additional scholarly sources** to the literature review from HO 396
- examine the state of the literature as it pertains to a specific research question, topical area, or concept
- focus on relevant scholarly sources that provide both context and substance to the thesis' overall argument
- be organized around themes developed from the literature that help the student make their argument
- demonstrate an analysis of the sources that helps support or dispute the main research question

- *Conclusion*

The conclusion should include a summary of the students' findings from the review, discuss existing gaps, and suggest directions for future research.

- Reference Page/Works Cited* (with added sources from HO 496)
- Appendix (optional)*

3. Capstone Project

For the final capstone project, students should include all of their work from HO 396, but change the wording from present or future tense (e.g., "For this project, I will research...") to past tense (e.g., "For this project, I researched..."). Students should also update any sections in which they made changes during their research/project completion phase. Often times, researchers need to tweak the methods they use or even the question they set out to ask. Final projects should reflect those changes.

The final capstone project should include the sections below. Indicated with an asterisk is the work students completed in HO 396 but updated as needed for HO 496. Indicated in italics is new work completed in HO 496.

- Abstract*
- Introduction and Thesis Statement*
- Theory Section (if relevant)*
- Literature Review*
- Research Methods/Methods of Problem Solving*
- *Creative Work/Project*

Students should submit their creative work/project to their reader(s) and the Honors School Dean. For example, students can submit a video of a musical recital or theatrical performance; portfolio of high-quality digital images of a painting, sculpture, photography exhibit; a hard copy of a business plan; a learning unit, curriculum or professional development workshop; an active link to a website created by the student.

- *Reflective/Contextual Essay*

Students are required to write an essay that reflects on or contextualizes the capstone work. Honors students should consult with their faculty reader(s) to determine the essay's content, length, and organization. In all cases, the

essay should demonstrate the student's educational process, mastery of existing applicable scholarship or craft in the field of study, and display thoughtful analysis and intellectual rigor.

The essay should document in a formal way, the following items:

- Why this project is important within a broad context.
- What problem this project solved or question the project addressed.
- How the project unfolded over time.
- How the student generated ideas and made decisions.
- The actions, meetings, significant roadblocks and progress involved in the project.
- Overall themes, plans, and outcomes based on the original theoretical lens and previous research reviewed.
- Noteworthy moments from the project.
- Reference Page/Works Cited* (with added sources from HO 496)
- Appendix* (optional)

H. PRESENTING THE RESEARCH THESIS/CAPSTONE PROJECT

All students completing an honors research thesis or capstone project must present their work at either the fall or spring Honors School Research Conference. The Honors School will contact students to register for the conference and submit an abstract.

Students completing HO 496 during Summer Session C can either wait until the fall research conference to present their work, or they can request to present their research to the Honors School staff as well as to their reader(s) at the end of Summer Session C.

The presentation should include the student's remarks and presentation (e.g., PowerPoint, Prezi, video, etc.), followed by responding to questions from the audience. The student's remarks at the Honors School Research Conference are typically limited to 8 minutes with 2 minutes left for questions and answers. In rare cases when a student is unable to attend the Honors School Research Conference, the student will be required to give an extended presentation to a smaller group of faculty and students.

If students want their work to be considered for any of the Honors School awards (see Section I below), they will need to present their research, receive an A or A- in HO 496, submit their final thesis/capstone to the Honors School upon completion, and apply for consideration.

I. HONORS THESIS/CAPSTONE AWARDS

The Honors School and Honors Council recognizes exceptional honors theses and capstone projects through two awards:

1. The Honors Council Award for Best Thesis/Capstone

The Honors Council Award for Best Thesis/Capstone is a competitive and prestigious award that is granted to an Honors School thesis/capstone completed during the previous calendar year that the Honors Council deems to be the most outstanding.

To be considered for the Honors Council's Award for Best Thesis/Capstone, students must:

- Receive an A or A- in HO 496.
- Submit their final draft in pdf format (for written portions) and shareable links (for creative video or other multimedia materials).
- Apply for consideration through the Honors School's application process.

In their deliberations, the Honors Council will consider several criteria, including:

- **Originality of Thesis/Capstone:** Does the thesis or capstone go beyond a review of scholarship pertaining to a topic to demonstrate potential for an original contribution to scholarship in the field of study?
- **Depth and Range of Research:** Does the thesis demonstrate an insightful understanding of prior research, research variables, and the need for supporting evidence? In general, students should have completed, through a literature review, research involving at least twenty-five scholarly sources.
- **Clarity of Argument:** Relative to disciplinary standards, is the hypothesis or main idea/question clear, and is the project developed in an organized, logical, and persuasive manner? Does the author explain the broad importance of the work conducted?
- **Quality of Presentation:** Is the thesis clearly written and organized, are all tables/equations/figures free from error, is the document formatted, and are source uses documented in a style appropriate to the discipline?

To further grow the scope and interest of our students and faculty in conducting research, the expectations of the Honors School is:

- that the winner of this award will make a no more than one page abstract of their work and a picture available to the Honors School with permission to use in publications and reports
- the winner, when invited by the Honors School, will attend meetings and forums to showcase their accomplishments and inspire our students and faculty to pursue societal impact with zeal and passion. The Honors School Dean will be happy to work with the student's schedule and availability
- the winner will either shoot (mobile phone is fine) or allow the Honors School to shoot a no more than five minute video describing their project, their inspiration for the project, and major contributions of their

project, such that it may be made available for our students and faculty to play in and outside classrooms in perpetuity.

2. The Leon Hess Business School Award for Societal Impact in Honors (Pilot Award Program for AY 2023-24)

School Award for Societal Impact in Honors will reward an honors thesis or capstone project deemed by the Honors Council to have the highest societal impact. Applicants and winners can come from any school at Monmouth University. This pilot award will be available during the academic year of 2023-24 and will be revisited yearly depending on availability of funds.

The Leon Hess Business School Award for Societal Impact in Honors aims to recognize an honors student, and their reader(s), whose thesis or creative capstone has the express goal of solving or addressing a significant societal problem. Such research or projects will aim to contribute to solving the most urgent challenges of our time or help improve conditions for a specific aspect of society.

Having approved this joint initiative between the Honors School and the Leon Hess Business School, the Honors Council has agreed to create a subcommittee of the Honors Council to adjudicate the award, selecting one winner to receive \$500. If there is one reader, that reader will receive \$500 as well. If there is a second reader, the first reader will receive \$350 and the second reader will receive \$150.

To be considered for the Leon Hess Business School Award for Societal Impact in Honors, students must be in the Honors School and:

- Receive an A or A- in HO 496.
- Submit their final draft in pdf format (for written portions) and shareable links (for creative video or other multimedia materials).
- Apply for consideration through the Honors School's application process.
- NOT be the winner of the Honors Council Award for Best Thesis/Capstone. That is, although students can apply for both awards, no one student can be the recipient of both awards.

In their deliberations, the Honors Council can consider projects that fall under categories that members deem to be of social importance and societal impact. The Honors Council can, but is not required to consider such categories as the United Nations Development Goals but can expand their consideration to any areas that the Honors Council considers to be of relevance to the award.

In their deliberations, the Honors Council will consider several criteria, including:

- 1) Purpose: Is the main purpose of the thesis/capstone aligned with addressing a societal problem?
- 2) Communication: Does the thesis/capstone clearly articulate the connection between the purpose of the thesis/capstone to specific societal concerns and implications, with a convincing explanation of the importance of addressing the specific societal concern in order to make a societal impact?
- 3) Method: Does the thesis/capstone incorporate a method of inquiry or solution that lends towards societal impact?

- 4) Results: Does the thesis/capstone achieve results that have implicated direct societal impact or application of results towards societal impact?

To further grow the scope and interest of our students and faculty in societal impact related endeavors, the expectations of the Honors School and the Leon Hess Business School (LHBS) are:

- that the winner of this award will make a no more than one-page abstract of their work and a picture available to the LHBS Dean's office and the Honors School with permission to use in publications and reports
- as and when invited by the LHBS Dean and the Honors School Dean this winner will attend meetings and forums to showcase their accomplishments and inspire our students and faculty to pursue societal impact with zeal and passion. Both Deans will be happy to work with the student's schedule and availability
- the winner will either shoot (mobile phone is fine) or allow LHBS to shoot a no more than five-minute video describing their project, their inspiration for the project, and major contributions of their project, such that it may be made available for our students and faculty to play in and outside classrooms in perpetuity.