Application Packet
For
Graduation with Honors
2002-2003

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Date: ________________________

Name: ________________________ Student #: ________________________
Mr. / Ms. / Mrs. (circle one)

Honors In: ________________________

Local Address:
________________________________________
________________________________________

Local Phone: ________________________

E-mail: ________________________

First & Last Names & Addresses of Parents and/or Partner and/or Spouse: (for notification purposes)

Parent(s) / Spouse / Partner (circle one) Parent(s) / Spouse / Partner (circle one)
Mr. & Mrs. / Mr. / Mrs. / Ms. (circle one) Mr. & Mrs. / Mr. / Mrs. / Ms. (circle one)

________________________________________
________________________________________

Cumulative GPA: _____

Major GPA: ________
I plan to graduate: Semester ______ Year ______

I intend to graduate with: _____ Departmental Honors _____ General Honors

II. REQUIREMENTS

I have read the requirements for graduation with honors at the University of Colorado.

Signature: Date:

I give permission for the publication of the title of my thesis, and should I achieve the level of *Summa Cum Laude*,
give permission for my abstract to be published on the Honors Program Web Page.

Signature: Date:

I give permission for my Honors designation to be posted by the last 6 digits of my student number.

No designations will be communicated by phone!
III. PROSPECTUS & ADVISOR SIGNATURE

When summarizing your thesis project answer one or more of the following questions:

- What is the problem you are investigating?
- What is the hypothesis you are testing?
- What is the focus of your study?
- What is your goal in this study?

The basic characteristic of a satisfactory thesis is that it be consistent with the standards of good scholarship as recognized by your discipline. It should give evidence of a sophisticated grasp of problem, an effective approach to the problem, and, of course, clarity of expression. It should contain some new data, an original viewpoint, a new synthesis, the application of a new technique, or the use of a new method of analysis.

In general, the thesis should follow the analytical traditions of western scholarship with a sufficiently narrow focus that a particular topic can be explored in depth.

a. PROPOSED TITLE OF THESIS:

b. BRIEF SUMMARY OF THESIS:
c. **SCHEDULE:**
d. BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Signature of Advisor:__________________________________________

Date:____________________
1. General Considerations

- You may elect to pursue Departmental Honors, General Honors, or both.

- Candidates for either Departmental or General Honors must submit an application for graduation with Honors to the Honors Program Office, Norlin M400L, before the announced deadline. (See attached list of deadlines.) The application calls for a prospectus of the thesis topic and requires the signature of the candidate’s thesis advisor.

- Honors candidates are urged to look into the possibilities for participation in the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP). Under this program a student and a faculty member may submit a proposal for partial funding of a research project. The UROP office is located in LIBR S430. UROP phone numbers are 303-492-2596 or 303-735-6677.

- The Honors Council decides who will graduate with Honors as well as the level of Honors awarded. The Honors Council consists of a committee from the College of Arts and Sciences and is appointed by the Associate Dean for Curricular Affairs. The award and level of Honors is determined by the quality of the thesis, an oral examination and the candidate’s academic record. Honors designations (Cum Laude, Magna Cum Laude, Summa Cum Laude) are recognized by a certificate, noted in the graduation program and indicated on the diploma.

- Thesis abstracts for students graduating Summa Cum Laude since Fall 1994 are now on the Honors Program Home Page. The address for the home page is: http://ucsub.colorado.edu/~honors/Home.html.

2. Who is qualified to do an Honors Thesis?

The Honors Program requires that a student wishing to graduate with Honors have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.3 for Departmental Honors and a 3.5 for General Honors. There is some variation among departments but no department has a requirement below 3.3. Some departments
also have specific course requirements. If you are uncertain about your department’s requirements, including GPA, check with your department’s Honors Council representative.

The Honors Council has adopted the following policies:

- **Honors will not be granted in the student’s minor** (and thus a thesis cannot be written in a minor) **unless approval is provided in writing by both the major and minor departments.**

- Students pursuing Honors with a Distributed Studies or Individually Structured Major must designate a major area with an appropriate advisor for the purpose of their Honors thesis. As an alternative, they may pursue the General Honors track.

- Students wishing to graduate with a double major may not submit the same thesis for both degrees.

3. **Requirements for Departmental Honors**

- Completion of all departmental Honors requirements. **Since departmental requirements vary you will need to consult with the Honors Council representative in the appropriate department.** A list of Honors Council representatives is available in the Honors Program office.

- A thesis, which indicates your ability to do original work (see your department’s Honors Council representative for details).

- Candidates for Honors must deliver the following to the Honors Program office located in Norlin M400L by the announced deadline: Approved final copy of the Senior Thesis for candidates are due in the Honors Program Office prior to the Honors Council meeting. Include any changes, should there be any, prescribed by the thesis defense committee. The thesis and a copy of the abstract must be Velo bound (Kinko’s does this) **plus** a loose (unbound) copy of the abstract. **Please no spiral bound thesis.**

- It is helpful to have the Thesis Advisory Committee members on the title page. If a running title is used in the thesis, it must not exceed 50 characters, including spaces. The abstract not to exceed 250 words written so as to be understandable by persons who are not specialists in the subject. The Abstract must include the candidate’s name, department and thesis title.
Oral Defense of Thesis: Candidates for Honors must complete an oral examination over their thesis work. The oral examination committee must consist of at least three members of the faculty. The committee must include a representative from the Honors Council as well as a faculty member from outside your major department. One committee member may satisfy this requirement if the Honors Council representative is from an outside department. It is the candidate’s responsibility to schedule the examination and to see that the committee is constituted correctly.

Though the examination committee may require changes, the designation recommendation the committee makes to the Honors Council is based on the version of the thesis submitted by the deadline.

4. Requirements for General Honors

- Candidates for General Honors must have a 3.5 cumulative GPA at the time they apply for graduation with Honors.

- Completion of at least 12 hours of General Honors courses with a grade of A or B. This course work must include at least one Senior Seminar/Critical Thinking, Humanities, Social Science, and Natural Science course.

- There is an important difference between General Honors and Departmental Honors thesis. The Departmental Honors thesis is designed to demonstrate the candidate’s ability to conduct original creative research within boundaries of the major discipline. General Honor’s research is designed to demonstrate the candidate’s ability to either conduct research of a broad interdisciplinary nature or to allow the candidate to conduct cross-disciplinary research beyond the bounds of the major. The General Honors prospectus must include a discussion of how the chosen research will fulfill one or the other of these criteria.

Each proposal for General Honor’s research must be reviewed and approved by the Honors Program Director. The proposal must be submitted to the Honors Office by the announced deadline.

- Like all Honors theses, the General Honors thesis is prepared to demonstrate scholarship, originality, and thoroughness. Typically the thesis involves concentrated work over a five or six-month period and reports original research or creative work. Seniors intending to graduate in Spring should start making plans and discussing those plans with their principal advisor by the beginning of the Fall term. Fall graduates should begin their work in the Spring prior to the semester they graduate.
We suggest that students pursuing General Honors and intending to graduate in the Spring take an Honors Senior Seminar during the Spring or Fall term preceding their senior year. Students may wish to take up to three credit hours of independent study (usually supervised by their Honors thesis advisor) designed as thesis preparation.

**The thesis must be in its final form at the deadline for its submission.** Candidates for General Honors must deliver the following to the Honors Program office located in Norlin M400L by the announced deadline: Approved final copy of the Senior Thesis for candidates are due in the Honors Program Office prior to the Honors Council meeting. Include any changes, should there be any, prescribed by the thesis defense committee. A Velo bound copy of the thesis and the abstract (Kinko’s does this) **plus** an unbound copy of the abstract. **Please no spiral bound thesis.** Though the examination committee may require changes, the recommendation the committee makes to the Honors Council is based on the version of the thesis submitted by the deadline.

- **Oral Defense of the Thesis:** Candidates for General Honors must complete an oral examination over their thesis work. Students writing a thesis for General Honors should seek a principle advisor from among regular faculty members. Two other faculty members will assist the principle advisor, one that is a member of the Honors Council and one that is appointed by the Honors Program Director. To insure sufficient guidance, it is essential that the student keep the committee members informed of the progress of the thesis. The advisor should be constantly consulted as the thesis develops. Students who encounter difficulties in achieving Honors are often students who fail to keep in touch with their principle advisor.

**Guidelines For Writing A General Honors Thesis**

- The student should select a research topic at least by the beginning of the senior academic year. Many students begin work the preceding year or summer and some use a previous Honors term paper as the concept for much further elaboration in an Honors thesis.

- A General Honors Thesis should be inter-disciplinary in nature. The topic should be selected with the agreement of a faculty advisor. It is very important that the student meet regularly with the advisor about the research and writing in progress. The major cause of disappointment in the process of seeking Honors is failure on the part of the student to keep the advisor informed on the progress made in preparing the thesis.

- A prospectus which is handed in to the Honors Office in formal application for Honors should include:
  - A working title
The average length of a finished thesis is about 30-50 pages of text, double spaced, plus a few pages of bibliography. There is no precise rule concerning the length of the paper. It is possible for a very short (e.g., 25 page) paper to be brilliant, sophisticated and well written and for a long paper to be verbose, repetitious and superficial.

The paper should include the following:
- A table of contents
- An introduction explaining the importance or relevance of the topic, including the reasons or hypothesis that has inspired the research. The introduction might also include the limits of the topics covered, for example, investigating a specific time-frame or only one or several authors, etc.
- An explanation of the method(s) and sources listed
- The substance of the paper itself
- A conclusion that summarizes the findings. No new material should be included in the conclusion.

The thesis should not be a mere ordering or description of facts or events. Where there is descriptive material chronologies, or list of characters or events, etc., it may be included in one or more appendices at the end of the thesis before the endnotes and bibliography.

The bibliography should be as scholarly and up-to-date as possible. References in the text to sources used should be clearly and accurately indicated. This is particularly important when using the interpretation of another scholar. Whenever using actual wording from a scholar quotation marks must be used.

Notes and references may be either footnotes or endnotes but they must be consistent. Footnotes or endnotes should be used when quoting a source, using other people’s ideas, or citing statistical data.

The bibliography at the end of the paper must be complete. Books must include author, title, year and place of publication, and the name of the publisher. Articles must include author, title of the article, name of periodical, volume and issue number, date, and the inclusive pages. Be consistent in the format being used.
writing requirements for all Honors thesis. Pay close attention to spelling, sentence and paragraph structure, as well as careful proofreading.

Graduation With Honors
Frequently Asked Questions

The first thing that we must mention is to contact your department Honors Council Representative. If you are having trouble finding out what your department's requirements are, this is the person who should know. The list of Honors Council Representatives is available at the Honors Program office, in Norlin Library room M400L.

For General Honors questions, such as finding out what General Honors requirement a specific course counts for, call the Honors Program office at 492-6617 or e-mail us at honors@ucsub.colorado.edu.

1. The application packet has sections for a brief summary of my thesis, a schedule, and a bibliography. How complete do these have to be?

These sections are required so that your advisor can see that you've given your topic some thought. We recommend that the summary be as detailed as possible. This provides both you and your advisor clarity on the direction and goal of your thesis.

We recommend that the schedule include when you intend to complete primary research, dates that drafts will be completed, and times that you can discuss these drafts with your advisor. Hopefully this process will help you develop realistic deadlines for yourself and time the workload more efficiently. The bibliography doesn't need to be complete. What we require are at least a few initial sources for your research.

2. Is it possible for me to look at some past theses in my department to see what sorts of things previous Honors graduates did?

Yes. The Honors Program office keeps all theses on file forever. It's best if you call ahead (since many of the theses are in storage right now) so that we can find a decent selection for you, but even if you just have time to drop by we can usually find a thesis or two for you to look at.

If you are looking for a specific thesis, we need to know what semester the student graduated and their name. If all you have is a range of possible dates and a title, we may be able to find the thesis, but be forewarned that it will take much longer. We will need at least a couple days' warning to find specific theses.
We also are now putting the abstracts for students graduating Summa Cum Laude online. You can check these out by taking the appropriate semester's link from the main Graduation With Honors Information Page (http://ucsub.colorado.edu/~honors/grad.html).

3. **What are the advantages to doing a General Honors thesis over a Departmental Honors thesis and vice versa?**

There is an important difference between General Honors and Departmental Honors thesis. The Departmental Honors thesis is designed to demonstrate the candidate’s ability to conduct original creative research within boundaries of the major discipline. General Honor’s research is designed to demonstrate the candidate’s ability to either conduct research of a broad interdisciplinary nature or to allow the candidate to conduct cross-disciplinary research beyond the bounds of the major. Which one you decide to do is entirely up to you. Some people value the experience of making connections across disciplines, and some people prefer to demonstrate their command of a particular subject area. Which type of thesis will look better on a graduate school application is debatable. You can also elect to do both a General Honors thesis and a Departmental Thesis, which would demonstrate your abilities in both areas.

4. **Is it really worth it to do a thesis? Will the graduate schools I apply to care?**

When the Honors Program did its self-study two years ago, we learned that the Graduation with Honors process at CU-Boulder is among the most intensive in the nation among peer institutes. The thesis is modeled directly after a Master's thesis, as is the defense. The schools you apply to may not be aware of the rigor of CU-Boulder's thesis, however, so we recommend that you have your thesis advisor write a letter of recommendation for you that describes the process.

5. **When should I set up my Defense Committee?**

The best option is to set up your committee as soon as you start working on your thesis, so that you can get ongoing input from your committee members as well as your advisor. Your committee members should be faculty members with an interest in or knowledge of your topic, and why waste such great resources? They may not be able to put in as much time as your main advisor, but hopefully will be able to give you some guidance.

Failing that, your defense committee should be set up at least three weeks before you are set to defend. You need to have time to set up and confirm with each member a specific time and date for your defense and you need to find out how much time they will require to review your thesis before the defense. Some committee members require a copy of the thesis as much as two weeks before the defense date. Don't expect them to read your thesis the night or the morning before your defense.
6. Who needs to be on my defense committee?

You must have at least three faculty members on your committee. One of these people must be on the Honors Council, and one of them must be from outside your department. The person you choose as your Honors Council representative may also function as the outside member (if they are indeed from another department), but you still need at least three members on your committee. After you meet this requirement, you can have any additional members you want.

If you are working on a General Honors thesis, you must have at least one member of the General Honors faculty on your committee. If you do not have a specific person in mind, the Honors Program Director will assign someone to you. This person will also function as a co-advisor, whose main job will be to make sure you are doing a clearly interdisciplinary thesis.

7. How should I go about choosing people to be on my defense committee?

The best way to start is to contact any professors you have had that have an interest in your thesis subject area. You should also talk to your thesis advisor to see if they have anyone that they can recommend. If you are having trouble finding an appropriate/willing Honors Council representative, you can contact the Honors Program office.

8. Can I graduate with Honors in the summer?

Yes, you can BUT you must finish your thesis and defense by the Spring deadlines. The Honors Council does not meet in the summer, so if you do not defend by the spring deadlines, they will not be able to vote on your level of Honors until the following December. Remember, it is the Honors Council that decides your level of Honors, not your committee. If you do meet the spring deadlines but decide to graduate in the summer, let the Honors Program office know so we can make sure that your Honors designation is properly noted on the summer graduation program.

9. If I turned in an application to graduate with Honors in the spring (fall) and find out that I am not graduating until the fall (spring), should I let the Honors Program office know?

Yes. Otherwise, your application to graduate with Honors will be placed in the Mysterious Disappearances file with all of the other people who just never came back. This will cause both you and the Honors Program office unnecessary stress and hassle when you mysteriously reappear the following semester.

10. What are the GPA requirements for graduating Summa Cum Laude, Magna Cum Laude, and Cum Laude? Which designation is the highest?

Summa Cum Laude is the highest honor, followed by Magna Cum Laude and Cum Laude. While we do
have recommended GPA levels, your Honors designation is decided with the weight based about equally on GPA and the quality of the thesis. Hence, if your GPA is a little bit low but your thesis is amazing, you may graduate with a higher level of Honors than you expected. The reverse is also true. Even if you have a 4.0 GPA, you must still write a thesis that is of Summa Cum Laude quality to graduate with that distinction. In other words, if your GPA is a little bit low, that doesn't mean that you can't graduate with Honors any more than having a high GPA means that you automatically will.
11. How long are Honors theses?

Anywhere between 10 and 150 pages long. It really varies that much. What is important is the content, not the length.

12. What role should my advisor play in my thesis project?

Your advisor should help you find focus for your thesis. Use them to make sure that you are staying focused on your topic, to strengthen weak areas of your thesis, and for general advice. They should be able to help you define your goals in writing an Honors thesis and help you to achieve that goal. Are you writing this paper to publish your research, refine your skills, demonstrate your knowledge of a particular subject, or to more deeply study a topic or concept? Your advisor should help you determine how to achieve that goal.

13. Can I graduate with Honors without doing a thesis?

No, you can't graduate with Honors without a thesis. You may, however, be able to graduate with Distinction, which is based on GPA. Check with the College of Arts and Sciences office for more details.

14. How are designations decided?

There are several different steps to deciding the level of Honors (if any) a candidate will receive. The first step, of course, is maintaining a good GPA (generally 3.3 or better). The second step is writing a quality Honors thesis and doing an oral defense of your thesis. While you may turn in a final copy of your thesis, with corrections, to the Honors Program office after you defend, the copy of the thesis that the committee sees on your defense day is the copy on which they will base their recommendation.

After you have done your oral defense, your committee makes its recommendation to the Honors Council. The Honors Council then considers each candidate individually. The Honors Council, which is made up of representatives from each department that participates in the Honors Program (in other words, all departments in the College of Arts and Sciences, plus the School of Engineering and the School of Business), bases their decision on each candidate's GPA and the quality of their thesis. The Honors Council also strongly considers the recommendation of the Defense Committee, although they may grant a different designation.

15. What do committees look for in the oral defense?
While each committee is different, things that are often commented upon are your ability to make connections between your thesis and situations posed by committee members and the thoroughness of your grasp of your topic. Your committee will want to see you demonstrate the sort of comfort level with your topic that comes from truly understanding the concepts you set forth in your thesis. Show them that you take your subject seriously, and that you learned something.

16. If I do a thesis, am I guaranteed to graduate with Honors?

Although this rarely happens, there are the occasional candidates who write their thesis, defend it, and still do not graduate with Honors. These candidates usually fall into one of two categories: students whose GPAs were really too low for them to get Honors anyway, but were encouraged to try for the learning experience of doing a thesis; and students who had the GPA and just blew off their thesis. The decision to do a thesis is a serious one, and the thesis must be of very high quality to warrant Honors.

17. I took some Honors classes at another school. Can I use them to fulfill graduation with Honors requirements?

You cannot use Honors classes taken at another school to fulfill General Honors graduation requirements. Since you only have to take 4 different General Honors courses to fulfill the requirements, the burden shouldn't be too great. Your major department may allow you to use transfer credits to fulfill some of their requirements. Check with your department's Honors Council representative to find out.

18. What is the required format for the Honors thesis?

The Honors Program has the following requirements for the thesis format:

An abstract that is 250 words or less, **one bound** copy and **one unbound** copy with the thesis.

Running titles (a title on each page of your thesis) must be limited to 50 characters. **The thesis should be flat bound NOT spiral.**

Because the College of Arts and Sciences covers many departments the Honors Program does not set any other specific requirements for the thesis format. You should check with your departmental Honors Council representative for departmental format requirements.