

FACULTY OF ARTS
*School of Humanities, Communications
& Social Sciences*

HUM4000 A + B
HONOURS DISSERTATION

HANDBOOK



MONASH University

Prepared by:

Dr Eva Petersen for the School of Humanities, Communications & Social Sciences, Faculty of Arts,
Monash University

Produced and Published by:

School of Humanities, Communications and Social Sciences
Monash University
Gippsland Campus

© Copyright 2008

NOT FOR RESALE. All materials produced for this course of study are protected by copyright. Monash students are permitted to use these materials for personal study and research only, as permitted under the Copyright Act. Use of these materials for any other purposes, including copying or resale may infringe copyright unless written permission has been obtained from the copyright owners. Enquiries should be made to the publisher.

C O N T E N T S

Dissertation handbook	1
Welcome	1
Honours coordinator	1
Honours student service officer	1
The dissertation component of the Honours degree	1
Objectives	2
Supervision	2
Honours Forum	3
Satisfactory progress	4
Submission of Honours Dissertation	4
Honours in Writing	8
Template Front Page	9
Template Statement of Authorship	11

DISSERTATION HANDBOOK

Welcome

A warm welcome is extended to all students enrolled in HUM4000 A or HUM4000 B Honours Dissertation.

To obtain an Honours degree each student must successfully complete two 12 pts coursework units and a dissertation component worth 24 pts. The dissertation component is divided into an A and B unit, which must both be completed. While the coursework units have separate unit guides this handbook provides you with information about the requirements regarding the entire dissertation component.

Honours coordinator

The coordinator of the School of Humanities, Communications and Social Honours program for 2008 is:

Dr Eva Petersen Room: 1E 128. Consultation time Tuesdays 3-5pm
Phone: 5122 6559 (local call) or (03) 9902 6559
Email: eva.petersen@arts.monash.edu.au

The Honours coordinator is responsible for the day-to-day running of the Honours program. The Honours coordinator will be available during consultations hours or by appointment. If the Honours Coordinator is not available, contact the Deputy Honours Coordinator who in 2008 will be:

Dr Beth Edmondson, Room: 2W265
Phone: 5122 6388 (local call) or (03) 9902 6388
Email: beth.edmondson@arts.monash.edu.au

Honours student service officer

For administrative questions (e.g. enrolment, scholarships, intermission) students should contact the School's Honours Student Service officer:

Kim Peavey Room: HUMCASS reception
Phone: 5122 6262 (local call) or (03) 9902 6559
Email: kim.peavey@arts.monash.edu

The dissertation component of the Honours degree

The dissertation component provides students with the opportunity to expand their knowledge of a relatively narrow topic within their chosen discipline and

to design and conduct research on that topic. Students produce a dissertation of 15,000-18,000 words on an approved topic selected and researched by the candidate under supervision of a member of academic staff with expertise in the proposed area of research. In the process of preparing their dissertations, students will be required to participate in a non-graded honours seminar.

Objectives

On successful completion of HUM4000 A + B students should:

1. Be able to demonstrate expertise in a specific area of the chosen discipline.
2. Be able to independently design and conduct a research project.
3. Have advanced academic research skills and highly developed academic writing skills.
4. Have produced a coherent, well-organised and professionally presented dissertation in the discipline.

Supervision

Honours students are expected to be motivated learners capable of independent study under guidance. The formal teaching mode in HUM4000 A + B will be individual consultation between the student and a dissertation supervisor.

Locating a supervisor

Upon enrolment in a dissertation unit the student should take steps to secure a supervisor. It can be done in a variety of ways. If the student has already determined who s/he would like as a supervisor s/he should contact the prospective supervisor as well as the Honours Coordinator so that fit and availability can be determined. Students could also contact the relevant Head of Discipline to begin a conversation about areas of interest and the Head may make suggestions. To locate the Head of discipline please go to the HUMCASS staff profile <http://www.arts.monash.edu.au/humcass/staff/index.html>. Alternatively the student should seek the guidance of the Honours Coordinator.

The academic staff profiles listed on the HUMCASS web-site may also provide a source of inspiration in terms of determining area of research and/or supervision

Topic and supervisor approval

As stated under the aims of the units, topics for research must be approved. To reduce the need to fill in several forms, students are asked to submit a Topic and Supervisor approval form no later than at the end of Week 3 of the semester in which they first enrol in the dissertation sequence. This form is available for download on HUMCASS Honours web-site. The application will be assessed and signed by the prospective supervisor, the relevant Head of Discipline and

the Honours Coordinator. Students will be notified of approval by the end of Week 4.

Supervision format

Each student is entitled to a one hour meeting with his/her supervisor per week during teaching semester.

For on-campus students consultation with the dissertation supervisor usually takes place in the form face to face meetings.

For off-campus students supervision will take place via email, telephone or internet facilitated conversations (web-cam + voice over internet protocol, e.g. Skype).

It is strongly recommended, regardless of study-mode, that a meeting schedule is determined at the start of each semester. It is the student's responsibility to keep in regular contact with the supervisor.

Managing your supervisor

Students are advised that supervisors have many different commitments and they are often very busy. Students should therefore arrange meetings well in advance, always provide enough time for supervisors to read drafts, and always in advance notify the supervisor if scheduled meetings can not be attended.

Students should keep their supervisor informed if they are experiencing any difficulties which are impeding the progress of the dissertation. If they experience problems with the supervisory process which cannot be dealt with by consultation with the supervisor, students should consult the Honours Coordinator. If the Honours Coordinator also happens to be the supervisor, students should contact the relevant Head of Discipline. It is important that any problems with the progress of the dissertation or with supervision are dealt with as they arise.

Students are expected to respond appropriately to the advice and guidance given by their supervisor in respect of the dissertation. The supervisor will correct elementary errors as a matter of course, however in commenting on drafts the supervisor will more importantly provide advice on such matters as the nature of arguments advanced, important theoretical and conceptual issues, the employment of evidence, or appropriate literature to be consulted. Ultimately, however, the content of the dissertation remains the responsibility of the student. If students experience difficulties with their command of expression or other aspects of academic writing, their supervisor may refer them to the appropriate Language and Learning Unit.

Honours Forum

All students enrolled in Honours dissertation units are required to present their work-in-progress at the Honours Forum of each semester. Participation in the Honours Forum is a non-graded compulsory hurdle in order to achieve a satisfactory progress report (see below). On-campus students are expected to present in-person and OCL students must either attend in person or organise an

alternative means of presenting their work (via tele-conference, pre-recorded video, or otherwise).

The Honours Forum is designed to ascertain progress and for students to receive feedback on their work from academic staff and their fellow students.

Students enrolled in the dissertation unit Part A are expected to deliver a presentation of 15 minutes duration, with 5 minutes extra for comments and question. The presentation should normally include:

- A description of the topic and central questions of the dissertation
- A description of the rationale/justification for the research
- An outline of the research project, including methodology
- An indication of potential difficulties and the means of addressing these

Students enrolled in the dissertation unit Part B are expected to deliver a presentation of 20 minutes duration, with 10 minutes extra for comments and questions. The presentation should normally include:

- A presentation of the work completed to date including empirical research findings or arguments developed
- Indicate any methodological/theoretical difficulties encountered and possible or proven solutions

Satisfactory progress

In order to proceed from HUM4000A to HUM4000B students must demonstrate satisfactory progress. The supervisor must submit a progress report no later than by the end of the examination period in the relevant teaching semester. S/he is required to indicate whether progress is satisfactory or not. S/he will consider overall progress but also take into consideration participation in the Honours Forum.

In case of unsatisfactory progress the student will be called to a meeting with the Honours Coordinator, who may decide to discontinue the student's enrolment in the program.

Submission of Honours Dissertation

Honours dissertations are due on the last Friday of the teaching semester.

Length of the Dissertation

The recommended length for the dissertation is 15,000 words. Material in excess of 15,000 words will not constitute an advantage in obtaining a higher grade. The length does not include such items as acknowledgements, tables, charts, maps, diagrams, bibliography and notes which merely indicate sources.

Preparation of the Dissertation

The responsibility of the layout of the dissertation and the selection of the title rests with the student, after discussion with their supervisor/s. The method of referencing within the body of the dissertation differs from discipline to discipline. The choice of a particular style manual to be followed in the dissertation should be decided in consultation with the student's supervisor/s. Students must state the sources of information and ideas from the work of others which they have drawn upon.

Presentation of the Dissertation

The dissertation must be typed on A4 paper, on one side only, with 1, 5 or double spacing. Quotations and footnotes may be typed in single spacing. Adequate margins; that is, not less than 40 millimetres on the left hand side of the page and 15 millimetres on the other three sides, should be used.

Contents

The contents of the dissertation should be ordered as follows:

1. A title page giving the title of the dissertation in full, the name and any degrees of the student, and the name of the degree for which the dissertation is being submitted, the name of the School and of the University, and the date of the submission (see attached).
2. A table of contents.
3. A summary/abstract in no more than 500 words.
4. A signed statement of authorship to the effect that the dissertation contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any tertiary institution and that, to the best of the student's knowledge and belief, the dissertation contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the dissertation (see attached).
5. An acknowledgement of any assistance given or work carried out by another person or organisation.
6. The main text.
7. Bibliography.
8. Appendices, if any.

Diagrams and Figures

The following are general suggestions for normal practice:

1. Diagrams and figures, etc. should preferably be drawn or photocopied on A4 paper and bound in the appropriate place in the text.
2. All figures should form a right-hand page with the legend positioned either at the bottom or, if necessary, on the page facing the figures.

3. Tables should be inserted in the appropriate place in the text. Lengthy or bulky tables should, however, appear as an appendix.
4. Diagrams, maps, tables, etc. exceeding A4 size should be folded so as to read as a right-hand page when open.

Submission of the Dissertation Copies

Four copies of the dissertation must be lodged with the School of Humanities, Communications & Social Sciences for examination. The dissertation should be bound in either soft or hard covers. The binding of the dissertation is the responsibility of the candidate. The supervisor/s must provide a statement that the work was carried out by the candidate and that, in their opinion, the dissertation is worthy of examination (see attached).

School policy on plagiarism

Plagiarism refers to the taking of another person's thoughts or writings and attempting to pass them off as one's own. It constitutes serious academic misconduct.

Plagiarism in assignments can take three forms:

1. Taking ideas from textbooks, journals, study guides or other sources which are expressed in the student's own words (ie. paraphrased from the original) *without* proper acknowledgment of the source of ideas.
2. Copying verbatim from textbooks, journals, study guides or other sources *without* the use of quotation marks and/or proper acknowledgment of the source. This includes copying anything from a phrase to a full paragraph or more.
3. Taking ideas or copying verbatim from another student's work. It should be noted that students who allow their work to be used by other students are equally guilty of plagiarism as those who use others' work.

Penalties for plagiarism

Plagiarism may result in the dissertation being given a Fail. If plagiarism is detected the Honours Coordinator will notify the Head of School who may take disciplinary action or refer the student to the Disciplinary Board.

Examination

Each dissertation will be marked by one internal marker and one external marker. The Honours Coordinator will, under advice from the supervisor, assign markers. The supervisor may not also be the examiner of the Honours dissertation. The examination process normally takes 4-6 weeks from the date of submission.

All examiners' reports will be in writing and submitted to the Honours Coordinator. If there is a major discrepancy between assessments, the Honours

Coordinator, under advice from the supervisor, will appoint a third marker. In these cases students must expect a prolonged examination process. For further details on this process see the Honours Manual, available on the HUMCASS Honours website.

On the basis of the coursework grades and the dissertation result, the Honours Coordinator will determine the final grade for each candidate. The final grade, along with the components comprising it, will be recommended to the School Board of Examiners.

Assessment Criteria

Examiners will be provided with a copy of the attached marking sheet. The dissertation will be marked on the extent to which it demonstrates:

- the ability to define and justify a field of research;
- an adequate familiarity with and grasp of the relevant literature;
- the ability to relate evidence to that research issue; and
- the ability to develop and present a coherent and sustained argument.

To ascertain standards the following classification will be used:

HD (80%-100%)

High Distinction: A high distinction assignment contains a cohesive, comprehensive and well-supported argument/composition. The dissertation demonstrates evidence of wide reading that has been applied in a thoughtful and critical manner to develop the student's own analysis and arguments in a creative way. To achieve a high HD grade (90-99%), the student will have covered every major issue that is reasonable to expect of them and/or provided novel insights into the topic. Additionally, the dissertation shows an excellent and sophisticated grasp of the topic/theory/approach under discussion. The dissertation will have few to no technical errors and it will be succinctly written.

D (70%-79%)

Distinction: A distinction dissertation contains a cohesive and well-supported argument/composition. There is a clear indication that the student has read widely, understood the source material, and integrated evidence in a critical manner informed by the concepts and ideas of the discipline. The student will have covered most but not all major issues that is reasonable to expect. The dissertation contains few technical errors and will be well-written.

C (60%-69%)

Credit: A credit dissertation contains a range of relevant points that are mostly, but not always, clearly and appropriately linked. The dissertation demonstrates more extensive reading than basic references. It evaluates the topic/theory/approach under discussion in a competent way. The dissertation may contain some technical errors and is mostly well-written.

P (50%-59%)

Pass: A pass dissertation contains a range of relevant points demonstrating that the student has read and understood the basic references and has some

awareness of the topic/theory/approach under discussion. The dissertation may however make little progress toward integrating the points into an overly coherent argument or composition. The dissertation may contain some technical errors and demonstrates sufficient writing skills.

N (0-49%)

Fail: A dissertation will be graded as unsatisfactory and fail where the student fails to demonstrate sufficient grasp of the topic/theory/approach under discussion; uses insufficient and inappropriate readings; does not keep to the set topic/task; does not substantiate points made or reference sources adequately; plagiarises or copies another person's work.

After examination:

1 copy is returned to the student
2 copies are kept by the School
1 copy is given to the supervisor

Honours in Writing

Students undertaking Honours in Writing can choose between the regular 15,000 word dissertation option or the following option:

Creative Composition and Exegesis

The Honours candidate will be required to produce a portfolio of creative writing of 7,500 words or equivalent (weighting: 50%) that is informed by and responds to the candidate's research into a particular aspect of literary theory and criticism or into a specialisation within the discipline of writing. The portfolio will be accompanied by a critical exegesis of 7,500 words (weighting: 50%) which provides an account of the research and theoretical issues informing the production, the form and the significance of that creative composition.

Contemporary theories of literature and writing tend to emphasise the permeable nature of the limit between (and hence the fluid identities of) "creative" and "critical" (or "theoretical") forms of writing, and it is in this context the nature of the "creative composition" is best understood. For the purpose of the assessment task, the term "creative writing" is thus intended in the widest sense possible. Typically, a portfolio of creative writing will consist of an extended work (or two or three shorter works) of narrative fiction or a collection of poetry which focuses on a central theme and/or question of style. In some cases, however, candidates may choose to investigate recent literary experimentations with and theoretical debates over the possibilities of multimedia- and hypertext-writing. While the bulk of the latter will necessarily take the form of writing (in the traditional sense of the term), some equivalence will be granted in respect of the required word count in recognition of the additional workload entailed in producing multimedia and/or hypertext projects.

The purpose of the Creative Composition is to provide opportunities for successful creative writing students to refine their existing writing skills and to

acquire new skills within the context of rigorous academic investigation into the nature and history of writing. In this way, the process of researching and writing the portfolio of creative writing will enable the Honours candidate to develop advanced creative writing skills and Honours-level academic research skills, while also acquiring specific expertise in an aspect of literary theory and criticism and a broad understanding of the major issues within the academic study of writing.

Separate marking criteria exist for this option. Please contact the Honours Coordinator to obtain the marking sheet.

[Example of front page]

DISSERTATION TITLE

by

JOE BLOGGS

Student ID No: 75757575

Dissertation submitted as partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the Honours Degree of Bachelor of Arts

Supervised by

DR MICKEY MOUSE

School of Humanities, Communications & Social Sciences

Monash University

October 2003

Statement of Authorship

This dissertation is my own work containing, to the best of my knowledge and belief, no material published or written by another person except as referred to in the text. None of the material submitted as part of this dissertation has been accepted for the award of the any other degree or diploma in any tertiary institution.

Signed: _____ Dated: _____

As supervisor of *JOE BLOGGS*, I confirm that the work submitted in this dissertation has, to the best of my knowledge, been carried out by the student named above, and is worthy of examination.

Signed: _____ Dated: _____

Supervisor's name: _____

Monash University**School of Humanities, Communications & Social Sciences****Marking Template for Honours Dissertations**

Student's name: _____

Dissertation title: _____

Examiner's Name: _____

Please use the prompt questions as guidelines only, as some of these may not be applicable.

You may indicate a letter grade for each criterion if you wish.

You can expand the textboxes or attach a separate sheet.

1. Research topic: scope and rationale:

- is the research topic clearly defined and well justified?
- are the theoretical and methodological approaches clearly outlined and appropriate?
- are the limitations of the thesis acknowledged?
- is there a degree of originality in the approach to the topic?

[expand textbox]

2. Review of the literature:

- has the relevant literature been adequately reviewed?
- are the sources adequately contextualised and discussed?

[expand textbox]

3. Research and data gathering:

- does the dissertation use appropriate sources (primary and secondary, as applicable)?

- does the candidate demonstrate the ability to synthesise material from both primary and secondary sources?

[expand textbox]

4. Analysis and interpretation of evidence/data:

- does the dissertation adequately support its points by reference to appropriate evidence?
- does the dissertation avoid unfounded generalisation?
- has the evidence been adequately analysed and critiqued?
- are theoretical concepts appropriately applied and integrated into the analysis?

[expand textbox]

5. Structure and organisation:

- is the dissertation well organised, logical and coherent?
- does the dissertation include an adequate and appropriate introduction and conclusion?
- does the thesis avoid needless repetition?

[expand textbox]

6. Presentation:

- is the dissertation well written?
- does the presentation meet format requirements?
- are sources correctly referenced?
- does the dissertation use a reference system which is appropriate to the discipline?
- has the dissertation been adequately proof-read?

[expand textbox]

7. Overall argument of the thesis:

- does the dissertation satisfy its stated aims?
- is the argument clearly articulated?
- is the argument well developed?
- are the conclusions soundly based?

[expand textbox]

8. General Comments by the Examiner

[expand textbox]

Overall grade: _____

Percentage mark: _____

Signature: _____