FOURTH YEAR HONOURS Communication and Media Studies
(formerly Communication Studies)

Handbook 2016

Enquiries:

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Information in this publication was correct as at January 2016, but is subject to change from time to time. In particular, the University reserves the right to change the content and/or the method of presentation and/or the method of assessment of any unit of study, to withdraw any unit of study or program, and/or to vary arrangements for any program.
Statement of Objectives

The objective of Honours study in Communication and Media Studies is to increase your understanding of the fields of Communication and Media Studies through:

- sustained and close attention to particular concepts, texts, and theoretical, creative, and practical media issues
- work on an original major research project
- development of research skills, including preparation of research proposals and critical bibliographies, acquisition of research materials and introduction to methodology.

Outcomes

Students will be able to:

1. understand and analyse advanced disciplinary concepts in media and communication;
2. undertake advanced research projects and manage all phases including inception, planning, development, conduct, analysis, presentation and finalisation;
3. analyse key media and communication texts in complex areas with advanced application of theory;
4. engage in advanced practical, creative and production activities with specific, well-planned outcomes; and
5. communicate with a very high level of expression, oral presentation and effectiveness.

Eligibility

You are eligible for Honours enrolment if you have completed a B.A. (Communication and Media Studies) pass degree from UWA or another institution, with grades of 70% or higher in relevant upper-level units (e.g., third-year media/communication units). Students with grades of 65% or higher in Level 3 units in the major may also be admitted into the Honours program if they have demonstrated the capacity to complete the dissertation component and suitable supervision can be arranged. If you wish to enrol in joint or cognate Honours with another discipline, you must also meet the requirements of that discipline.

- If you have doubts about your eligibility, or are only just ineligible, see the Honours Coordinator.
Results & Examination

The examination of your thesis is carried out according with the University policy on “Honours Award” which can be found at http://www.governance.uwa.edu.au/procedures/policies/policies-and-procedures?policy=UP07/123

The Honours marking scale differs from that used in the rest of your undergraduate degree. Honours Results are awarded as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade Description</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>80% and higher</td>
<td>First Class Honours</td>
<td>(H1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-79%</td>
<td>Second Class Honours, Division 1</td>
<td>(H2A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69%</td>
<td>Second Class Honours, Division 2</td>
<td>(H2B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59%</td>
<td>Third Class Honours</td>
<td>(H3)</td>
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As per the policy marking criteria outlined in the Appendices to the Honours Award policy grading will focus on:

- Research Design & Methodology
- Critical Analysis
- Literature review & Scholarship
- Argument
- Presentation

Your final Honours mark is a composite formed out of your Dissertation marks (2 x 12 credit point units, 50%) and your taught seminar marks (4 x 6 credit point units, 12.5% each).

Students are not permitted to repeat units for Honours; the grades achieved for the units you take will be factored into your overall results—so plan your program wisely.
Course Components and Structure

To complete Honours in Communication and Media Studies, a student must complete 48 points of study by taking **four seminar units** (each worth 6 points; a total of 24 points) and a **dissertation** (comprised of two 12 credit point units, taken across 2 semesters, worth a total of 24 credit points). This work can be completed **full-time** (over one year) or **part-time** (over two years or eighteen months). There are three enrolment options for doing Honours:

**Option A1 (February Start): Sole enrolment in Communication and Media Studies.**

- Communication and Media Studies Seminar Units for 2016 (“Taught” units are 6 credit points each; each worth 12.5% of final result.)
  
  **Semester 1***: COMM4101 – Concepts in Communication  
  COMM4140 – Dissertation (12pts)  
  
  Plus 1 of  
  COMM4102 – Sexuality, Media, Culture  
  Or  
  COMM4604 – Media, Law and Ethics  
  
  **Semester 2***: COMM4141 – Dissertation (12pts)  
  
  Plus 2 selected from  
  COMM4104 – Public Communication  
  COMM4103 – iGeneration: Self and Digital Creativity  
  COMM4704 – Global Media & Cross-Cultural Communication  
  
  * Students should not undertake SCOS4100 Honours Research Skills

You must complete both COMM4140 and COMM4141, which are the dissertation units. The dissertation is written on an approved topic of your choice. It is typically 12,000–18,000 words long and comprises 50% of your final result. The dissertation must be completed over, at most, two consecutive semesters (this applies to full-time and part-time students alike).

**Option A2 (Mid-Year Start): Sole enrolment in Communication and Media Studies**

- Communication and Media Studies Seminar Units for 2016/2017 (mid-year start). (“Taught” units are 6 points each; each worth 12.5% of final result.)
  
  **Semester 2**:  
  SOCS1000 – Honours Research Skills  
  COMM4140 – Dissertation 1 (12 points)  
  
  Plus 1 selected from  
  COMM4104 – Public Communication  
  COMM4103 – iGeneration: Self and Digital Creativity  
  COMM4704 – Global Media & Cross-Cultural Communication
Semester 1: COMM4101 – Concepts in Communication  
COMM4141 – Dissertation 2 (12 points)  
plus  
COMM4102 – Sexuality, Media, Culture  
or  
COMM4604 – Media, Law and Ethics

**Option B: Joint enrolment between Communication and Media Studies and another discipline**

With this option students undertake two Communication seminar units and two seminar units from their other disciplinary major. Enrolment in joint Honours will vary significantly depending on the student’s interests and because of this, **joint Honours enrolment must be planned in advance in close consultation with the Honours Coordinators of both disciplines.**

Typically, joint Honours will include two Honours seminar units from Communication and Media Studies and two Honours seminar units from the joint discipline. Joint students must complete one research skills seminar unit from either Communication and Media Studies or their joint discipline. The Communication and Media Studies research skills unit is COMM4101 – Concepts in Communication.

The dissertation is typically supervised by two supervisors, one from each discipline, although this can be changed according to the particulars of the project. The dissertation must be completed over two consecutive semesters (this applies to full-time and part-time students alike).

While we encourage all our Honours students to commence their Honours program at the start of the academic year it may be possible to plan a midyear enrolment in joint Honours, depending on the seminar offerings of the joint discipline. Such an enrolment must be planned in close consultation with the Honours Coordinators from each discipline.

**Option C: Cognate enrolment between Communication and Media Studies and another discipline**

With this option you complete most work, including the thesis, in Communication and Media Studies, and only one or two units in the “other” area. Your enrolment must consist of COMM4101–Concepts in Communication and then a mixture of three other Honours units from Communication and Media Studies and your cognate discipline.

It may be possible to plan a midyear enrolment in cognate Honours, if the enrolment is part time and if there are suitably timed seminar offerings in the cognate discipline. Such an enrolment must be planned in close consultation with the Honours Coordinator.

**Deadlines for submission of the dissertation are:**

For students completing in Semester 1, 2016: **Thursday May 26, 2016.**
For students completing in Semester 2, 2016: **Thursday October 27, 2016.**
For students completing in Semester 1, 2017: **Thursday May 25, 2017.**

*Note: No late submissions can be accepted without the prior approval of the Discipline Chair of Media and Communication. These dates are subject to change due to external factors such as scholarship rankings.*
Deadlines for enrolment are:

Students wishing to commence Honours in Communication and Media Studies in Semester 1, 2016 should enrol by 1 February 2016. Please contact the Honours Coordinator before this date. Enrolment takes place online (check the Faculty website).

Students wishing to commence in Semester 2 2016 must arrange to speak to the Honours coordinator or consider Joint or Cognate Honours in conjunction with a separate discipline and apply by mid-June 2016. Please contact the Honours Coordinator before this date. Enrolment is online (check the Faculty website).

Later enrolments are often possible but will depend on the availability of appropriate supervision

Planning Your Enrolment:

1) **Full-time** or **part-time**?
   A full-time enrolment runs over two semesters (one year); a part-time enrolment normally runs over four semesters (two years) but can be contracted to three semesters (eighteen months) with careful advance planning. **All students, whether full-time or part-time, work on the dissertation for two consecutive semesters (normally the final two semesters of their Honours enrolment period).**

2) **Other Major**
   Given the normal pattern of a joint or cognate enrolment with another discipline, you must be eligible for Honours both in Communication and Media Studies and in your other disciplinary major. Please note that there may be different eligibility requirements between different disciplines. As well as contacting the Honours Coordinator for Communication and Media Studies, you should also arrange to see the Honours Coordinator of your other discipline major in order to plan your program. Make sure you check and meet any relevant deadlines from that discipline, as they may be different.

How to Enrol:

1) Decide whether you wish to enrol **full-time** or **part-time**, and, if you are seeking joint or cognate enrolment, confirm that you are eligible for Honours in your **other major**.

2) Complete the form on page 14, and send by email to the Communication and Media Studies Honours Coordinator (Steven Maras – steven.maras@uwa.edu.au). Feel free to phone or email for an appointment if you wish to discuss dissertation options or choices of units.

Important Points to Note:

- We expect you to have read this information booklet and attendant policies carefully. It will be assumed you are aware of this information.
- Changes to your selection of units must be made to the Honours Coordinator in writing and may require you to complete a formal Change-of-Enrolment.
- Students are expected to attend classes and are bound by the attendance expectations in the unit outlines. These classes are part of your coursework and are not optional.
- Students writing a dissertation are expected to meet with their supervisors regularly and to submit written draft-work regularly. Meeting frequency will vary from fortnightly to more frequently as deadlines arise.
- Students and Supervisors should familiarize themselves with the “Best Practice Guide For Honours Supervision: Responsibilities Of Students And Supervisors” (Appendix 1)
- Students are expected to give a seminar presentation on their topic proposal in their first semester of dissertation work, and may be asked to deliver a seminar presentation on their progress in their second semester. Note that the presentation on the topic proposal must occur before the proposal is formally submitted.
- Students intending to do any qualitative research involving interviews or surveys, empirical research, or a thesis with a creative component, that in any way involves people or animals, need to seek approval from their supervisor and from the Honours Coordinator before they can proceed with their research. In some circumstances there may be a need to seek formal university ethics approval.

Academic Misconduct (Cheating)

Academic misconduct is any activity or practice engaged in by a student that breaches explicit guidelines relating to the production of work for assessment, in a manner that compromises or defeats the purpose of that assessment—in other words, cheating. Students must not engage in academic misconduct.

Any form of cheating undermines and significantly reduces the real value of a university education. In order to benefit from the experience offered, students must do their own research, thinking and writing throughout their course. The real value of a university education is to truly earn a qualification by acquiring the skills and knowledge which the University strives to develop in and impart to its graduates.

There are a number of forms of behaviour which constitute academic misconduct. These include, but are not limited to, cheating, or attempting to cheat through collusion or inappropriate collaboration with other students, “recycling” your own work in more than one assessment, fabricating data or results, taking unauthorised material into an examination, and plagiarism.

Plagiarism is usually defined as the unattributed use of someone else’s words, creations, ideas and arguments as one’s own. Within university policies it is usually further extended to include the use of ‘too close’ or extensive paraphrase. For example, cutting and pasting text from the Web without attributing it to the author would be constituted as plagiarism and therefore dealt with as cheating.
There are a range of penalties for academic misconduct, depending upon the seriousness of the cheating, from loss of credit to expulsion from the University.

The University provides University-wide guidelines on Ethical Scholarship, Academic Literacy and Academic Misconduct which can be assessed at
http://www.arts.uwa.edu.au/students/policies/dishonesty

It is your responsibility to be aware of UWA's Policy on Ethical Scholarship and Academic Misconduct.

**Recycling**

Be aware that you must not “recycle” material taken from other assignments. All class papers, essays and dissertations must be new and original material.

If in Honours work you return to a text or topic you have written on before, there can be no re-use (or even partial re-use) of material. No part of a submitted essay may form part of your dissertation, and an essay or assignment presented for assessment in earlier years may not reappear, even in part
Key Dates  
(Students Submitting Dissertations in October 2016)

Note that this schedule is a guide only, to be considered as a suggested model for your writing goals. Once your schedule is established by your supervisor(s) and you, Communication and Media Studies expects students to meet the agreed deadlines as they progress with their dissertation. Failure to meet these deadlines will be viewed seriously, and may constitute unsatisfactory progress.

Students submitting dissertations in either cognate, joint or part time enrolments will need to discuss their relevant dates with their supervisor(s) and Honours Coordinator.

12 February 2016 Broad topic area for the dissertation

If you have not done so by this time, inform the Honours Coordinator of your broad dissertation topic-area in writing by this date. The "broad topic area" should include the concepts and/or texts and/or time-period to be studied — for example, "Multiculturalism in Australian film of the 1990s" or "The implications of the Free Trade Agreement for cultural production in Australia". You should also indicate if you wish to build a practical component into your thesis work, and if so, a brief description of the project — for example, “a screenplay exploring the dynamics of multicultural discourses in Australia" or “an interactive website that demonstrates how the Free Trade Agreement is likely to affect the production of new media content”.

The Media and Communication Discipline Group will appoint a Supervisor for your dissertation as soon as possible after you formally notify us of your broad topic area. Meet with your Supervisor no later than the first week of Semester 1 (otherwise the Supervisor may be re-allocated).

At your first supervisory meeting you should complete and have signed the "Supervision agreement", page 15 of this booklet, and then submit this to the Honours Coordinator.

6 June 2016 Formal Research Proposal

Through the course of the seminar unit COMM4101 you would have developed and refined your research proposal. This process includes the presentation of your research proposal to discipline staff and students and will be concluded with the submission of a written proposal as part of your COMM4101 assessment. Once completed, your written research proposal should also be submitted to your supervisor(s). In the case of dissertations that require empirical research, ethical consideration or a creative component, the proposal should also be submitted to the Honours Coordinator. At the end of June you will have been working on your dissertation for more than 6 months of the 10 months available, and you should have produced around 6000 words

4 July 2016 Progress deadline: first chapter/section

Submit this material to your Supervisors by this date. At the end of July you should have around 7000–9000 words of your dissertation written.

1 August 2016 Progress deadline: next chapter/section

This should be submitted to your Supervisors by this date.

29 August 2016 Progress deadline: next chapter/section

This should be submitted to your Supervisors by this date. At the end of August you should have around 11,000 words of your dissertation written.
26 September 2015  Progress deadline: next chapter/section

This should be submitted to your Supervisors by this date. You should be planning to offer a presentation of your research to staff and fellow students, with the aim that any worthwhile advice offered can be used in the final stages of writing the dissertation. Note that this is best decided between your supervisor and you.

6 October 2016  Progress deadline: full draft completed

By this date you should be able to submit a full draft of the dissertation to your Supervisor. This should be around 12,000–18,000 words in length. You now have just over two weeks for revision and careful proof-reading.

27 October 2016  Submission

An electronic copy (in one file) via email to ss@uwa.edu.au must be submitted to the Social Sciences Office before 4:00pm on this date (it is recommended that one print and bind several copies for self, for future job applications, etc.).

Then celebrate! (Joint Honours students must submit additional copies of their dissertation to their other discipline).

Other possibilities: completing a dissertation with a creative component

While we encourage students to complete a traditional dissertation, we do welcome the development of a dissertation topic that includes a creative component.

The components of a creative dissertation are:

• An original creative piece (or pieces) such as a screenplay, a digital video project, or a multimedia presentation

• An essay or exegesis of at least 3000 and no more than 4000 words on a literary/theoretical/cultural issue related to the creative piece submitted. An exegesis normally includes documentation of the creative object, a summary of the research proposal, a discussion of research methodology and the place of the research in the field or discourse of the discipline. Consult the Honours coordinator for specific requirements pertaining to your research.

The details of the relative weighting of the creative component and the essay will depend upon the size and complexity of each component. The length of the essay, along with the relative weighting of each component will be negotiated with your supervisors, according to the nature of your creative project. The two elements of the dissertation are examined together, with only one overall grade awarded. Thus, both elements are important, as is the link between the two. Do note that if the creative component in any way involves people or animals that this will need to be discussed by both the supervisor and the Honours Coordinator, and, depending on the circumstances, formal ethics approval may be required.
Other possibilities: completing a dissertation with an *empirical research or fieldwork* component.

The Honours thesis is *primarily* a piece of library and/or creative media research, based on academic literature dealing with the topic in question but, depending on the project, it is permissible to include a limited amount of supplementary field research.

Student requests to conduct a small number of interviews or utilise other forms of empirical research will be considered on a case by case basis by the supervisor and the Honours Coordinator. Each request will be determined by:

- The quality of the proposal and the degree to which the student demonstrates that the project requires empirical research
- The practical nature of the student's timeline for data collection
- The degree to which the student demonstrates awareness of and ability to consider the ethical nature of the research.

If the request is approved the student must design and conduct the research in a manner consistent with ethics approval.

**Frequently Asked Questions: About the Dissertation**

*How do I choose my topic?*

- You have a free choice, but it’s usually wise to work in an area in which you have developed substantial background knowledge from some of the units you have already taken. (For example, if you’ve never studied feminist theory, it might not be very wise to plan to write your dissertation on the gendered aspects of blogging.)

On the other hand, the dissertation can offer an opportunity to carry out substantial research in a field which has always been of interest to you but which you have never had the opportunity to study in formal units. (Examples of this kind include popular music, fantasy role-playing, etc.) In such cases, although you may not have “substantial background knowledge from units taken”, you would have substantial knowledge based upon your own activities and interests.

*I’m having problem determining a topic. What can I do?*

- One of the first things you can do is read up on this. There are numerous guides to getting started with a research question. Two excellent introductions are Chapter 3, “Getting Started”, from Jane Stokes, *How to do Media and Cultural Studies* (Second Edition), and Chapter 3, “From Topics to Questions”, from Wayne C. Booth, et al. *The Craft of Research* (Third Edition). Both are accessible in Reid Library.

The University “Honours Hub” resource can also prove to be very useful in orienting yourself into Honours.


Some previous Honours titles include:

- “The Ability of Video Game Aesthetics to Enable Flow: In Defence of Game-derived Happiness”
- “Indian Community Media & The Italian Diaspora in Australia; Australia, Media History & Culture”
- “It’s Showtime! Gender, Sexuality, and the Political Economy in Dexter and United States of Tara”
“Children in the Media: Sexualisation, Representation and Reading Practices”
“How to hide (and it's all your fault); Social Media and its effects on privacy and identity”
“The Author is Dead, Long Live the Author: Reconceiving Authorship in the Context of New Media”
“Comedians for a Better Tomorrow, Tomorrow: Satire as Political Participation”
“Performative identities online: Regulating practices and the (de)stabilisation of identity on social networks”

**How do I go about organizing an interdisciplinary dissertation?**
- Many dissertations in Communication and Media Studies are shared between Communication and Media Studies and your “other” major. The key requirement here is *early* consultation with BOTH disciplines. It is vital you get agreement from all concerned about the suitability of the proposed topic area. This is your responsibility, and will involve a fair bit of liaison on your behalf; but the result will be worth it.

**How is my Supervisors determined?**
- The choice of Supervisor is a fit between the topic, student preference, staff and resource availability, and staff expertise. The final decision rests with the Honours Coordinator and the Chair of Discipline, as it is subject to workloads and other staffing issues. If the nominated supervisor is not able to supervise the research, the school may be able to nominate another supervisor or the student may be required to select another topic.

Once you have a broad idea about your area of study, you should make an appointment to discuss your idea with the Honours Coordinator. There will sometimes be a number of members of staff who may be appropriate to supervise your topic. In this case, we may suggest that you have an informal chat with each of the people named. Once a supervisor is determined there should then be a formal meeting, at which time the Supervision Agreement is signed.

**How often should I meet with my Supervisors?**
- It will vary, for we try to be flexible and to meet student needs. In general, though, you should not go more than 3 weeks without meeting with your Supervisors. Once you have written work to present for the supervisors’ scrutiny, you would probably meet for about 30–45 minutes every 2–4 weeks.

One other point: if you are going to hand in written work for your supervisors to read and discuss with you, you should submit this work a week or so before the planned meeting date. If you want your work to be given careful consideration, please allow the time for careful consideration!

**How should I arrange meetings if I have two supervisors?**
- There are two main options: meeting with both supervisors at once, or meeting them separately. It is strongly recommended that at the beginning of your dissertation you meet with both supervisors together, and use that meeting to discuss arrangements for supervision meetings in the future. You may find that you will vary between the options depending on what you need from your supervisors. It is also very important to be clear on what each of you expect from each other in the supervision process.

**Frequently Asked Questions: Writing the Dissertation**

**When to start:**
The earlier you begin, the easier it will be to choose a topic that suits you and to explore it thoroughly. Aim to be able to read for the dissertation with some confidence and purpose over the break between semesters (summer or winter, depending upon when you are commencing). It's much easier to sustain momentum over the break between semesters than to start cold when the semester begins, for the early weeks of each semester will bring demands from the units you're studying.
**How to start thinking about a topic:**

It will help to speak to a staff member (such as your tutor, prospective supervisor or the Honours Coordinator) about your plans. They may be able to assist in your choice of a broad topic area.

**Finding a "broad topic area":**

The "broad topic area" in an interdisciplinary field such as Communication and Media Studies will vary widely, according in part to the perspectives that you bring with you from your discipline major. What you need is some definition of your interest clear enough to permit useful reading of texts which might eventually lie at the centre of your dissertation, and of works to extend and refine your general understanding of the chosen area. It may not be profitable to plunge immediately into specialist monographs and journal articles; make an attempt to establish in your early reading the broader outlines of the area you’re considering. This helps with both the selection and the understanding of more specialised studies later on.

**Choosing a topic:**

Once you have settled upon a broad topic area, you will need to think about the specific topic you will explore within that area. Remember that your topic must be manageable in 12,000 – 18,000 words. Consultation with your Supervisors will be important in finalising your topic.

**Note-taking:**

Very important: Always note the exact publishing details of a book, and keep track of the pagination. Make sure you record details of authors/editors; publisher; place-of-publication; year-of-publication. When taking a photocopy, write the details on the first page. This saves much time in the writing-up stage. Record clearly what is quotation (or paraphrase) and what is not.

Take some notes from anything you read, even if you don’t think highly of it. Your opinion might change later, and you won’t have time to read the book or article twice.

Don’t just take notes. From an early stage, write more connected, discursive passages about what you’re working on. These are much easier to write when work is fresh in your mind, and much easier to work from later than jotted notes. Your best ideas are likely to come to you while you’re writing. Even the jotting down of a few connected sentences is worthwhile. You may find your topic growing out of what you write.

**Referencing:**

Learn the referencing system early and stick with it. This will save time later on. Inventing your own referencing system is not encouraged. The preferred system in Communication and Media Studies is Harvard. [http://guides.is.uwa.edu.au/harvard](http://guides.is.uwa.edu.au/harvard) If this system does not suit your thesis you should discuss it with your supervisor.

**Drafts:**

Attempt a first draft early and be prepared to change it. It need not include the introduction. If you’re held up over some problem with the topic, a draft of a chapter or a particular section will provide a useful test for solving the problem, and should keep your work from stalling. Once you have begun to write, you will probably feel less awed by specialist studies in the field and you should be able to read them with more profit.

When working with many drafts be sure to use a naming system that allows you to track versions. E.g. Ch1~ver1.doc
**Taking supervision comments constructively:**

Make sure you understand your Supervisors’ comments. Don’t incorporate suggestions you don’t understand or disagree with. Try not to talk or write your way around an objection, but try to meet it. In this way you will avoid any sudden gap or reversal in your argument. It usually helps to let a few days pass between writing something and receiving comment on it; comments can then be viewed more objectively. **Consult regularly with your supervisors.**

**The final draft:**

Allow plenty of time for this, since ideas will come to you as you write and you will need time to include them and edit your work. Final work on footnotes, bibliography, and proof-reading usually takes considerably longer than expected, so allow for this.

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**PRESENTATION OF THE DISSERTATION**

You are required to submit an electronic copy (one file) to the Social Sciences Office on the due date.

The dissertation layout and format should observe the following conventions:

- Lines of text must be set out with **one-and-a-half spacing** or **double-spacing**, except for quotations and footnotes, which can be single-spaced.
- Quotations of three lines or more must be **indented** without quotation marks.
- Leave generous margins **all-round** the page. We recommend 3cm for the left margin, 2cm for the top, bottom, and right margins.
- Number all pages consecutively.
- **Paper size:** A4
- Follow the Communication and Media Studies style guide for referencing – please use either font types Arial or Times New Roman, and font size 12.
- Ideally footnotes should appear at the foot of the page, but they may be grouped together at the end of the dissertation, if this is easier.
- Divide the thesis into chapters or major sections of some kind.

The presentation of creative projects will depend on the genre and format you are working with. Consultation with your supervisor(s) about presentation is essential.

You should set out the **title page** of your dissertation as follows:

- Your name
- Dissertation title
- Year submitted
- Name of your supervisor
- Name of the course (BA Honours) Communication and Media Studies or Graduate Diploma in Arts [Advanced] or HDR Preliminary).

The general order of contents for the dissertation would be as follows:

- Title page
- Declaration
- Acknowledgements
- Abstract
- Contents page
- Dissertation
- Reference list.
The declaration must state the following:

Declaration:

This dissertation contains no material which has been accepted for any award of any other degree of diploma in any University, and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the dissertation.

Requests for Extensions

Extensions are handled by the Faculty, and requests must be submitted in writing through the Honours Coordinator. If you are thinking of applying for an extension, you must see the Honours Coordinator first.

A period of 10 months is available for the writing of the dissertation, and prudent planning would allow for a proportion of that time to be consumed by illness or other exigencies. Therefore students applying for an extension would be expected to face exceptional circumstances.

Examination of Dissertations

Dissertations are marked independently by two examiners, each of whom writes a brief report on the work. In the case of inter-disciplinary dissertations, an examiner from each discipline will be appointed. In some cases an external examiner will be appointed.
HONOURS (COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA STUDIES)

Supervision Agreement

Please take this page to your supervisors for your first meeting (no later than the first week of the relevant semester).

After it is completed, you should make a copy for your own records, and pass the original to the coordinator of Honours in Communication and Media Studies.

Student name: __________________________________________________________

StudentID: ______________________________________________________________

Type of Enrolment (Sole, Joint, Cognate): __________________________________

Broad topic area: _______________________________________________________

Submission date: _______________________________________________________

Supervisor 1 (name and signature): ________________________________________

Supervisor 2, if applicable (name and signature): ______________________________

Student statement:

I have read the Communication and Media Studies Honours Booklet. I understand it is my responsibility to make regular appointments to consult with my supervisors, and to ensure that I submit work according to a schedule established with my supervisor(s).

Signature _______________________________________________ Date _________________

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Disciplinary Notification Form 2016
HONOURS (COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA STUDIES)

Submit this form to the Honours Coordinator, before 1 February, 2016.

Note that this form does not in itself constitute an application for enrolment but is to inform the discipline about your intentions with Honours and to allow the discipline to determine your supervision requirements. The official application page can be found at http://www.studyat.uwa.edu.au/courses-and-careers/honours#apply

Submission of the form by email (steven.maras@uwa.edu.au) is the preferred submission method.

Name: 

__________________________________________

Student number:__________________________ Phone: __________________________

Address:

__________________________________________ Postcode: ____________

Email: ________________________________________________________________

1. Degree you are currently enrolled in (or most recently enrolled in):

____________________________________________________________________

2. Do you expect to enrol full or part time? ___________________________

3. Other Disciplinary Major: ______________________________________________

4. List the units you propose to take:

   Seminar 1:_____________________________ Semester offered: ______

   Seminar 2:_____________________________ Semester offered: ______

   Seminar 3:_____________________________ Semester offered: ______

   Seminar 4:_____________________________ Semester offered: ______

5. Dissertation Topic Area (attach a separate sheet if necessary): ________________

____________________________________________________________________

6. Possible supervisors for your dissertation (if known): _______________________

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THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA
A BEST PRACTICE GUIDE FOR HONOURS SUPERVISION:
RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS AND SUPERVISORS

1. Introduction

Honours students are required to undertake a supervised research project which comprises 50% of the credit point value of the honours course.

Honours courses allow students to undertake worthwhile research with a view to developing their research skills through the preparation of a thesis, where a thesis includes the output of research in the form of a dissertation or the equivalent such as a composition, performance, exhibition or creative or other approved work (see University Policy on Honours Award).

The role of the honours supervisor is to advise, guide and provide constructive feedback to the honours student throughout the duration of the honours project, as well as to encourage, support and mentor the student. An effective working relationship between an honours student and the supervisor is essential to the development and completion of a good honours thesis. Students and supervisors have clear roles and responsibilities in establishing and maintaining this working relationship.

This best practice guide is intended to inform students and supervisors regarding the process of selecting a supervisor and topic, working with a supervisor, and the responsibilities of supervisors and students. Although the guide has application across the University, students need to be aware that there are important differences between disciplines in these processes and responsibilities, which primarily stem from the nature of the research being undertaken in the various disciplines. As a result, this guide is not overly prescriptive and some parts of the guide may not apply to all disciplines.

Although finding a topic is normally substantially the responsibility of the student, students are advised to consult the Honours Coordinator if they are experiencing difficulty in identifying a suitable topic. Disciplines have considerable expertise and experience in assisting students in this important task.

The availability a student's preferred research topic and their nominated supervisor is subject to the availability of resources (funding and physical resources) and staffing (expert supervision).

2. Selecting a supervisor and a research topic

The establishment of the student-supervisor(s) team and selection of the topic of the research project vary across disciplines, but ultimately these tasks need to be managed as an active collaboration between the student and the supervisor, and with the involvement of the Honours Coordinator.

Some disciplines provide prospective honours students with a list of projects which are to be offered in the following year. For example, in the School of Physics, students are expected to attend honours seminars, meet with research groups and nominate up to three project preferences from the list. The research groups can confirm whether the research project, adequate supervision, and the required resources are available.

However, most disciplines expect that the student will take the initiative in seeking out possible supervisors and topics, and students need to understand the importance of making good decisions at the very earliest stages of their honours program.
As a first step, it is worthwhile for the student to have a discussion with the Honours Coordinator to identify possible areas of interest for a research topic. Although the remainder of section 2 is primarily directed towards the majority of students who are expected to take the initiative in identifying a research topic and supervisor, some of this information is also relevant to students who are studying in disciplines where prospective students are provided with a list of potential research topics.

2.1 Identifying potential supervisors

Before nominating a potential supervisor or supervisor(s), students are advised to:

- read some literature about conducting research and research in general, if this has not been covered in the student’s course to date;
- familiarise themselves with the research interests of academic staff within their discipline. Note: Information about the research expertise of academic staff can be found on the University’s website;
- talk to a few prospective supervisors about their research interests, possible research topics, their styles of supervision and what they expect of students;
- talk with current and former honours and postgraduate students in the school/discipline or research group, if possible, about their experiences of supervision.

2.2 Identifying a research topic and supervisor

Before selecting a preferred topic, it is advisable for the student to select one or more potential supervisors (See 2.1 Identifying potential supervisors above) and discuss possible constraints on topic choice with the Honours Coordinator. These constraints will include the availability of staff (for supervision) and resources (funding and equipment).

The student is advised to then identify some possible topics according to the following criteria:

- The area is of interest to the student and is likely to maintain the student’s enthusiasm for a year-long project.
- The area is of interest to a prospective supervisor.
- The topic is one in which the student can identify questions to be answered or gaps in the current knowledge.
- The project can realistically be completed within the time allocated and resources available.

Students are advised to nominate a supervisor with whom they feel they can work comfortably. However, the final decision as to whether a supervisor can supervise a particular student rests with the school, as it is subject to workloads and other staffing issues. If the nominated supervisor is not able to supervise the research, the school may be able to nominate another supervisor or the student may be required to select another topic.

3. Working with a supervisor

The program of meetings between the student and supervisor will vary depending on the nature of the research project. Some schools will provide more detailed guidance on how meetings are to be arranged, but, in general, a student’s collaboration with the supervisor will progress along the following lines:

- An initial meeting is held to clarify both the student’s and the supervisor’s expectations, to establish methods for regular communication, to discuss a topic in general terms and to organise a framework for and limits on a research project that is appropriate in size and

1 The section on Working with a Supervisor is largely derived from the University of Melbourne, Language and Learning Skills Unit’s report Honours.
academic demand for an honours student. In particular, students should discuss and negotiate with their supervisor issues such as:

- the regularity, timing and format of meetings. (Note: Typically, the meetings will occur at least once a fortnight.)
- the type and level of assistance that the student would like, and the supervisor is prepared to give, with respect to: choosing a topic and refining the project; planning a schedule; setting goals; finding appropriate literature; collecting the data and information; analysing and interpreting findings; planning the thesis; and writing and reviewing the thesis;
- the appropriate research design, content and presentation for the thesis;
- a schedule for the research and preparation of the thesis, including deadlines for key elements of the process; and
- the resources, services and facilities available to Honours students.

- Independent work (for several weeks at a time) occurs on elements of the project. The first of these would normally be a literature review or general introductory piece of writing. This review or initial project development may form part of structured coursework within the particular honours program, depending on the discipline.
- Regular progress meetings take place where the student can discuss issues and ideas arising from the student’s research and the supervisor will provide feedback on research progress and the review of drafts of written work. Students should submit to their supervisor summaries of their progress, including results, and drafts of written sections of the thesis in order to facilitate the provision of focussed and helpful discussion. Before meeting with the supervisor students are advised to prepare an agenda for the meeting including issues or problems they may wish to discuss. Students are advised to make notes of the meeting and to send a summary of these to the supervisor following the meeting to ensure that the student and the supervisor agree upon the outcomes.
- Final meetings occur when the student is close to submitting a thesis. These final meetings should discuss presentation, and minor revisions to the thesis. Major changes should not be made to the thesis at this stage. If required, major changes should have been made at an earlier stage.

The structure of the project may be such that the student has a number of direct supervisors. For example, students may work in a laboratory for the first half of the year and then spend an intense period of several months writing up their thesis. In this situation, students may work closely with a laboratory supervisor who may not be the project supervisor. In such cases it will still be necessary for students to meet their project supervisor regularly (at least monthly) to keep the supervisor informed of their progress. During the writing-up phase, students should submit their work on a chapter-by-chapter basis to ensure that they are progressing in the right direction.

Students should contact their supervisor if there are major difficulties. Generally, supervisors will rely on students to indicate if there are any difficulties. Students should be honest about their progress and should ask for the type of assistance that they need at a particular stage of their research project. This may involve more detailed feedback, advice on methodology, advice about staying on schedule or general issues of support and encouragement.

### 4. Responsibilities of a supervisor

Supervisors are responsible for providing academic guidance to students and for fostering an environment in which students can maximise their potential. Staff should not agree to supervise students unless they have the appropriate research expertise and relevant knowledge and interest in the student’s research topic. The Honours Coordinator has an important role in guiding the student.

Prior to the commencement of any honours project, the supervisor must establish that it is appropriate in scope and character for the honours course, and is feasible in terms of time, facilities, equipment, and technical and resource requirements. Where concerns remain over the feasibility of the project after discussion between the student and the supervisor, the supervisor will raise these concerns with the Honours Coordinator or head of school/discipline or research group.
The role of a supervisor involves:

- working with the student to clarify expectations of the honours program and the honours project at the outset;
- discussing with the student, at the outset, issues of research conduct relevant to the project, including the need for appropriate ethics approvals, the management of data, intellectual property and authorship issues, access to and use of restricted materials, academic conduct;
- suggesting ways in which the student can make the most effective use of time;
- recognising their own and the student’s personal strengths and limitations and identifying situations in which a student needs to be referred to colleagues for assistance;
- committing the time necessary to allow for maintaining the close and regular contact with the student (which normally includes weekly or fortnightly meetings) and establishing at the outset the basis on which contact will be made;
- requiring work from the student on a pre-arranged and agreed schedule;
- monitoring the progress of the work in accordance with the agreed schedule;
- discussing the progress against the agreed schedule with the student at regular intervals, and identifying any impediments to maintaining the schedule;
- monitoring the performance of the student relative to the standard required for the course, and ensuring that insufficient progress or work below the generally expected standard is brought to the student’s attention, and, if necessary, to the attention of the Honours Coordinator and/or appropriate school or faculty officer;
- providing prompt feedback (within two weeks - the actual time will depend upon the volume of work submitted and the supervisor’s other commitments) on the work submitted by the student, to an agreed schedule;
- when the thesis is submitted, providing a report on the student’s work outlining the student’s demonstrated levels of independence and initiative.

The supervisor’s role is facilitative and advisory. Supervisors are normally not expected to provide the candidate with a thesis topic (though suggesting a range of possible topics available within the wider research program of the school/discipline or research group is good practice), tell the student what to do, write the student’s thesis or remediate failings by the student.

The supervisor must notify the Honours Co-ordinator if he/she will be away for two weeks or more.

5. Responsibilities of a student

Students have a number of roles and responsibilities that contribute to the overall success of the research project: Students are responsible for their own level of success in the honours program and must:

- have read sufficiently widely on the subject to be able to place the project in context;
- be thoroughly familiar with the steps involved in the research project;
- prepare proposals, submissions and presentations relating to the research project, as required;
- discuss with the supervisor the type of supervisory assistance they believe will be most useful to them, and keep to an agreed schedule of meetings to ensure regular contact with their supervisor;
- take the initiative in raising problems or difficulties with progress in the research project;
- maintain the progress of the work in accordance with the stages agreed with the supervisor, including the submission of required work in sufficient time to allow for comments and discussion before proceeding to the next stage;
- discuss with the supervisor at regular intervals progress towards, and impediments to, maintaining the agreed timetable;
- maintain a strong commitment to the research project;
- be able to work independently;
- comply with all requirements relating to ethical conduct, data collection, retention and disclosure; intellectual property; privacy; and occupational health and safety procedures;
- comply with all relevant University legislation, including regulations, rules and policies;
- participate in school events including attendance at research seminars; and
- keep the supervisor informed of any difficulties or problems which may impact on the research project.

6. Useful reports and links

Australian National University, Honours Guide, Nov 2010
https://academicskills.anu.edu.au/node/35381

UWA STUDYSmarter Honours Hub – Preparing for Honours: Hints and Tips
http://www.studentservices.uwa.edu.au/ss/learning/online_services/honours_hub