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## SENIOR THESIS SYLLABUS 2025-2026

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

At Claremont McKenna College, Senior Thesis is a general education requirement, to be completed within a student's major. It is intended to be a serious exercise in the organization and presentation of written material. Students select their own topics, in consultation with their faculty reader. Students pursuing honors within their major(s) should consult their department chair(s) for guidelines pertinent to the senior thesis requirement. Students are responsible for determining their departmental requirements.

The thesis is a research paper and students are responsible, with the advice of their reader, for the investigation of sources, the accumulation of data, the selection of pertinent material, and the preparation of the thesis in acceptable form. All seniors must submit a completed [Senior Thesis Topic Form](#).

Students doing research that involves working with living human beings may need to get permission from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) before beginning research. Research that involves interviewing other people, distributing surveys, conducting experiments on people, or even observing particular people in their daily lives is normally what we call "research on human subjects," and all such research requires some level of approval from the IRB. See the [IRB website](#) for instructions on how to apply for IRB approval of research.

### **CMC Thesis**

All CMC students must choose a faculty reader who teaches within their major. Only off-campus majors may have a single reader from off-campus. Students are welcome to have an additional reader, if appropriate.

### **Credit and Duration Options**

Senior thesis may be a 1- or 2-semester project and must be completed during the final year. Students doing a 2-semester thesis must complete the 2-semester option in consecutive semesters, normally completed fall-spring during the senior year. Students scheduled to graduate or to leave CMC at the end of the fall semester may do a 2-semester spring-fall thesis during their final two semesters at CMC.

<b>1-semester, 1-credit thesis</b>	(1.0 credit)	<u>either</u> fall <u>or</u> spring of senior year
<b>2-semester, 1-credit thesis</b>	(0.5 credit fall + 0.5 credit spring)	fall <u>and</u> spring of senior year
<b>2-semester, 2-credit thesis</b>	(1.0 credit fall + 1.0 credit spring)	fall <u>and</u> spring of senior year

The option originally chosen may be changed (from a 1-semester to a 2-semester thesis, or vice versa) no later than the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the semester in which students start work on their senior thesis. Similarly, students may not change topics or readers after the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the semester in which they start their thesis. A maximum of 2 credits may be earned for a particular senior thesis, including preparatory or research courses.

### **Important Dates**

Last day to register for fall thesis: Monday, 9/08/2025

Fall 1-semester theses due: Monday, 12/01/2025 by 3:00pm. All CMC students must submit their senior thesis to The Claremont Colleges scholarly repository at [Scholarship@Claremont](#) on the theses due date.

Last day to register for spring thesis: Monday, 2/02/2026

Spring and 2-semester theses due: Monday, 4/27/2026 by 3:00pm. All CMC students must submit their senior thesis to The Claremont Colleges scholarly repository at [Scholarship@Claremont](#) on the theses due date.

Thesis registration options →	1-credit, 1-semester Fall Thesis	1-credit, 1-semester Spring Thesis	1-credit, 2-semester Fall/Spring Thesis	2-credit, 2-semester Fall/Spring Thesis
Last day to register for thesis option/change topic/reader	9/8/2025	2/02/2026	9/8/2025	
Thesis due by 3:00pm	12/01/2025	4/27/2026		

### **Keck Science Thesis**

Students completing a science major through Keck Science must complete a science thesis (Biology, Chemistry, Environmental Analysis, Neuroscience, or Physics 188L and 190L; or Biology, Chemistry, Environmental Analysis, Neuroscience, or Physics 191). All 2-semester science theses include labs and lab fees. Students may complete a 1-semester lab thesis under 190L with approval from the department. It is more common for 1-semester science theses to be “library theses,” which exclude a lab component. Science majors make all thesis arrangements through the [Keck Science Department](#) and must register for the appropriate course.

In addition to fulfilling all Keck Science Department senior thesis requirements, students completing a Keck Science major are required to upload their thesis to [Scholarship@Claremont](mailto:Scholarship@Claremont) or request an upload embargo or exemption if the research is sensitive or proprietary. Students who wish to exclude their theses from the Scholarship site will still upload to [Scholarship@Claremont](mailto:Scholarship@Claremont) to facilitate collection. Students may then submit a completed [exemption form](#). We will remove your thesis from the Scholarship repository upon receipt of your exemption request.

Students requesting an upload embargo or exemption must provide a PDF of the thesis to the CMC Registrar’s Office along with a completed Senior Thesis Upload Exception Request. Students completing a Keck Science thesis do not submit a bound copy of the thesis to the CMC Registrar’s Office.

### **Off-Campus Thesis**

Students completing an off-campus major may choose either to complete their senior thesis in that major under the appropriate course(s) at the major’s sponsoring college or through CMC.

CMC recognizes the following courses as equivalent to thesis in off-campus majors that require a capstone production:

- Studio Art Majors:
  - ART 192 PO – Advanced Projects in Studio Art (plus exhibit); or
  - ART 192 SC – Senior Project and Seminar in Art
- Computer Science Majors:
  - CSCI190 PO – Senior Seminar, and CSCI192 PO – Senior Project; or
  - CSCI183 HM – Computer Science Clinic I, and CSCI184 HM – Computer Science Clinic II
- Dance Majors:
  - DANC192 PO – Senior Project
- Music Majors:
  - MUS 192 PO – Senior Project

Students completing an off-campus major through one of the above options must upload their completed written product to [Scholarship@Claremont](mailto:Scholarship@Claremont) (e.g. paper, production notes, exhibition notes, project analysis or summary), or obtain an exemption or embargo, as appropriate. Students who wish to exclude their theses from the Scholarship site will still upload to [Scholarship@Claremont](mailto:Scholarship@Claremont) to facilitate collection. Students may then submit a completed [exemption form](#). We will remove your thesis from the Scholarship repository upon receipt of your exemption request.

## **THESIS REQUIREMENTS**

### **Length**

There is no set length requirement for a thesis. Students must work closely with their reader to determine the appropriate length. Quality of organization and care in editing are more important. The average 1-credit thesis is

approximately 50 pages, including notes, charts, and bibliography. The average 2-credit thesis is approximately 100 pages.

### **Format**

Be sure to include a blank sheet of paper between the title page and the table of contents.

The thesis will include:

- **Title Page** (a sample is included at the end of this syllabus)
- **Table of Contents**
- **Chaptering**
- **Documentation**
- **Bibliography**

### **Rules**

- Theses must be original work for this course only.
- A thesis may be an expansion of a previous term paper; if so, however, an explanation must be included with the Senior Thesis Topic Form and approval must have been given in advance by the faculty reader. Include the original paper as an appendix in the final submission and use the appropriate citations when you refer to it.
- All theses are carefully checked for originality. Students found to have committed academic dishonesty on their theses are subject to disciplinary measures through the Academic Standards Committee. If the act of dishonesty is a second offense, students are also dismissed from CMC without the possibility of returning to earn a degree. You must learn the proper citation rules and scrupulously follow them. If you have questions about proper citation, make an appointment at The Center for Writing and Public Discourse.
- A thesis failed for any reason cannot be made up during the same semester.

### **Progress**

Students must meet with their faculty reader on a regular basis throughout the semester(s). Progress, or lack thereof, will be indicated when low grades are due each semester. It is the responsibility of the student to find out what the expectations are of faculty readers and departments to avoid low grades. You should devise a schedule with your reader that specifies when outlines, bibliographies, drafts, etc. are due.

Students writing a 2-semester thesis should expect to be graded for the work completed at the end of the first semester. It is the student's responsibility to find out exactly what the reader wants turned in at the midpoint of each semester, as well as at the end of the first semester.

Here are some suggestions for your thesis progress:

- Bibliography by week 3
- Outline by week 4
- Literature Review by week 7
- Statement of Methodology by week 9
- 1<sup>st</sup> full draft by week 11
- 2<sup>nd</sup> full draft by week 12

### **Departmental Honors**

Theses being considered for departmental honors may have additional requirements. Consult your department for details.

### **SUBMISSION**

All CMC students must submit their senior thesis to The Claremont Colleges scholarly repository at [Scholarship@Claremont](mailto:Scholarship@Claremont) by 3:00pm on the theses due date.

Access the [Scholarship@Claremont](mailto:Scholarship@Claremont) site and upload your thesis in an acceptable format. Detailed instructions are available under "Instructions for Uploading" on the Claremont Colleges Library website at [Uploading Theses & Dissertations to Scholarship@Claremont](#). Your submission will be reviewed by the digital initiatives library staff and then posted to [Scholarship@Claremont](mailto:Scholarship@Claremont) after the thesis grade has been recorded.

Uploading your thesis is a mandatory requirement for CMC, as determined by the CMC faculty. Students who do not upload their thesis will have a hold placed on their academic record.

### **Notes about thesis upload**

- **Access:** When you upload your thesis, you may choose whether to provide worldwide [access](#) to your thesis or to limit access to your thesis to the Claremont Colleges IP range. Restricting access to only the Claremont Colleges IP range will prevent everyone, including you, from accessing your thesis on computers outside the Claremont Consortium. Access restrictions can be changed from IP restricted to open access, but not from open access to IP restricted.
- **Permanence:** Theses uploaded to Scholarship@Claremont are permanent and will not be altered or removed except in cases of plagiarized content or scholarship of failing quality, and only at the discretion of the Dean of Faculty.
- **Embargo:** If your thesis is pending publication, includes pending patents, or contains sensitive information, it may be appropriate to delay access to your uploaded thesis for up to 2 years by means of an embargo. Students [requesting embargo](#) must still upload their thesis by the 3:00pm on the theses due date.
- **Exemption:** Students who wish not to upload their thesis to the digital archive may request a [thesis upload exemption](#). Students who wish to exclude their theses from the Scholarship site will still upload to [Scholarship@Claremont](#) to facilitate collection. Students may then submit a completed [exemption form](#). We will remove your thesis from the Scholarship repository upon receipt of your exemption request.

### **Note about working papers**

Original outlines, notes, rough drafts, etc., must be maintained and made available to your reader upon request or on a shared cloud storage space that readers may access at any time.

### **GRADING AND PENALTIES**

Students registered for a 1-semester thesis will receive a letter grade and appropriate credit at the end of the semester. Students registered for a 2-semester thesis will receive a grade and appropriate credit for the work completed at the end of the first semester as well as a final grade at the end of the second semester. It is each student's responsibility to find out exactly what the reader wants turned in at the end of the first semester, whether an extensive outline, completed chapters, or chapter proposals. Students with 2-semester theses may receive either a letter grade and credit at the end of the first semester or a grade of P (In Progress and without credit) at the end of the first semester, at the reader's discretion. Letter grades and credit replace In Progress (P) grades upon completion of the 2-semester project.

Late theses will be penalized 1 grade point for every 24 hours late, illustrated as follows:

Submission	Penalty	Example
Up to 24 hours late	One (.33) grade point by 3:00pm Tuesday	From A to A-
24 to 48 hours late	Two (.67) grade points by 3:00pm Wednesday	From A to B+
48-72 hours late	Three (1) grade points by 3:00pm Thursday	From A to B
72-96 hours late	Four (1.33) grade points by 3:00pm Friday	From A to B-

Theses may not be submitted more than 96 hours late without an approved [Incomplete Grade Petition](#).

### **RESOURCES**

#### **Writing Assistance**

The Center for Writing and Public Discourse can provide valuable assistance to thesis writers. Trained and experienced writing consultants can advise on all aspects of thesis preparation from developing a viable thesis statement to using Turabian, MLA and APA. Make an appointment to see a writing consultant [early](#) in the semester.

#### **Style Manuals**

One of the following style manuals must be followed, as appropriate to the discipline of the thesis:  
(Please use the most recent edition.)

- **Theses in psychology** follow *The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, with the addition of the standard Senior Thesis title page. Do margins according to PMAPA recommendations. Your thesis will have the required CMC Senior Thesis title page, a blank page, then the PMAPA title page.

- **Theses in mathematics** follow the [American Statistical Association](#) manuscript format or, the [American Mathematical Society](#) format, or with the approval of the Mathematics Department and the Thesis Director, the style guide of another appropriate mathematics journal.
- **Theses in literature** follow [The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers](#).
- **Theses in all other fields** follow Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, (University of Chicago Press). Note the following modifications of Turabian: the rules for first reference to a work in a footnote apply to each chapter; that is, there must be a full bibliographic citation at the first reference to a work in each chapter, regardless of any prior reference in earlier chapters (see Turabian 8.12 and 8.22). In any case where other manuals are silent, consult Turabian.

[The Claremont Colleges Library](#) has many online resources including a citation help center. From your computer, scroll down to the Help section and look for Citation Help. On a mobile device, click Home then scroll down and click Research Support, scroll to Writing & Citing and select a resource.

The [University of Michigan Documents Center](#) is an excellent on-line resource that has links to all of the formatting guides, including Turabian. It also has links to examples of how to cite electronic sources. Type **citation guides** in the search box.

[Introduction to Basic Legal Citation](#) (online ed. 2015 by Peter W. Martin) is a legal citation primer based on the nineteenth edition of *The Bluebook: a Uniform System of Citation*.

## **Contacts**

### [Registrar's Office](#)

Email: [registrar@cmc.edu](mailto:registrar@cmc.edu)

Phone: 909-621-8101

Location: Bauer Center North, First Floor

### [The Center for Writing and Public Discourse](#)

Email: [writing@cmc.edu](mailto:writing@cmc.edu)

Phone: 909-607-4142

Location: Kravis Center, First Floor 101

### [Institutional Review Board \(IRB\)](#)

Email: [irb@cmc.edu](mailto:irb@cmc.edu)

## **Additional Resources**

### [Senior Thesis information](#)

Claremont McKenna College

Title

submitted to  
Professor Thesis Reader 1  
and  
Professor Thesis Reader 2  
*(if applicable)*

by  
Your Name

for  
Senior Thesis  
Semester Year  
Date