

# Senior Thesis Formatting Guidelines

Department of Economics

rev. Mar. 2009

## THESIS DUE DATE

Two copies of the thesis must be submitted by **5:00 pm on Thursday, March 11, 2010 to the Economics Undergraduate Office at Littauer 113**. Both copies will be returned, unless the combined grade of the thesis is Magna or higher, in which case one copy will be returned and the other will be sent to the Harvard Archives. Theses, thesis grades, and reader comments will be handed back in early May. Please note that we will not discuss your thesis readers with you at any time.

## PAPER AND PRINTING

Both copies of the thesis must be printed single-sided on acid-free paper. The Harvard Archives require laser printing. If you do not own a laser printer you must plan ahead so that you have enough time to print your thesis on a laser printer. **Note:** The department will not grant any extension due to a system failure or a problem with the computer or printer that you are using.

## BINDING

Both copies must be in binders (but not bound). Any type of binder that securely holds the thesis is acceptable; however, most students use the black spring binders sold at the Coop. Shop early! There are about 40 binders available for free in the undergraduate office - one per student; first come, first served.

## FORMAT

- **Title Page:** There is no established format that is required by the Economics Department; however, a nicely finished thesis should follow the pattern established in any book on writing a thesis or one of the two books listed below. See the following page for one example.
- **Footnotes and Bibliography:** There is no established format that is required by the Economics Department. We do require that the author choose some format and maintain it consistently throughout the thesis. Various formats can be found in Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*; and in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. Sources other than these may be used if preferred.
- **Margins:** Top, bottom, and right-hand margins should be one inch; the left-hand margin should be at least one and one-half inches, so that there is a small margin once pages are put in the binder, but no more than two inches. These measurements should be consistent on every page.
- **Spacing:** All theses should be double spaced.
- **Binder Cover:** Please also include on your binder cover a label that has the thesis title and your name. This is more for our convenience in distributing your theses to readers and returning them to you.

## LENGTH

The Economics faculty has established a limit of 100 pages of text and tables for a senior honors thesis. Students are strongly encouraged to redraft theses to comply with this limit. If, however, the substance of the student's research merits discussion in excess of 100 pages, there is no automatic penalty, and theses of any length will be accepted. Nonetheless, graders will be skeptical about excessive length and may penalize any thesis in excess of 100 pages if they do not concur that the length is justified by the additional substance. There is no minimum length. Depending on the topic, most theses range from 45 to 75 pages.

EXAMPLE TITLE PAGE

Writing a Senior Honors Thesis:  
Why Harvard Students Write Theses

Your Name

Presented to the Department of Economics  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for a Bachelor of Arts degree with Honors

Harvard College  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

March 11, 2010