

Requirements for Completing a Senior Thesis

After approval is given by the department for you to enroll in BIOL 701, you are encouraged to work closely with your committee in the further development of your research. You will be required to complete four steps before receiving grades for your thesis work. (See "[Deadlines](#)" page for dates):

1. *Write the results of your study as a final thesis.* The final paper most likely should be written in the format of the journal to which the work would be most appropriately submitted. You and your advisor will decide on a format, but it will generally follow the form of a published paper on that topic. A copy of your thesis must be submitted to each of your committee members no later than three days prior to the first thesis presentation. Deadlines for submission of earlier drafts to committee members for comment should be worked out with your advisor. Your committee will read your thesis prior to your presentation and prepare questions/comments accordingly. Theses from previous years are in the display case across from MBH 342. You are encouraged to look through them to get an idea of what constitutes a written thesis. Joanna Shipley can loan you the key.
2. *During the final two weeks of classes in the semester you will make a public presentation of your results.* These presentations normally take place at 12:30 Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. You will have 20-30 minutes to present your results and to answer questions from the audience concerning your research. See [Deadlines](#) page for when you must do this.
3. *Following the public presentation, you must defend your research before your Committee and any other faculty who wish to attend.* Your defense need not occur immediately after your public presentation, but in planning your defense, be sure to give yourself adequate time after your defense to make necessary changes to the final version of your thesis. During your defense you will be asked questions primarily about your research and other biological topics that relate to the theme of your work. However, faculty are free to ask any questions they want, and you are encouraged to talk to your Committee about your defense well in advance.
4. *Finally, you must submit the final version of your thesis, revised according to your committee's comments on the submitted version, your public presentation and your defense, to each member of your committee for final approval by the Friday of the 1st week of final exams (for Febs, by the last day of Winter Term).*
5. *Once you have received final approval from your committee, print at least two copies of your thesis (one for your advisor and one for you) plus (a PDF for the department), double sided, send the PDF to the Biology Department Coordinator, plus print any additional copies if requested by your committee members.* (Refer to "Turning in Your Thesis", in the "Forms and Worksheets" section, for details.) Each copy should be preceded by a title page of the style shown in the sample thesis title page (available on the "Forms and Worksheets" page, and signed by all committee members. This must be done no later than noon on the last day of exams.

The final grade for your senior thesis is decided by your committee based on your effort and progress throughout the term, your public presentation, your defense, your final paper, your adherence to all specified deadlines, and any other criteria that they have established. Final grades will be retroactively assigned for the first term of the project.