

**RST SENIOR THESIS
GUIDELINES
2024-2025
Approved May 1, 2024**

1. What is a senior thesis?

The senior thesis is an original research project that the student undertakes in their senior year.

2. Who can write a senior thesis?

Any RST senior with the requisite GPA *and* with an interest in pursuing an independent research project can write a senior thesis.

Please speak to Amy Lowrey (allowrey@ucdavis.edu) about GPA requirements and eligibility.

3. What are the requirements for the senior thesis?

The student will work closely with a faculty member in RST, who will serve as their mentor. In addition, students will also work together in a cohort. These group meetings will be supervised by Prof. Janowitz and Prof. Venkatesan.

Students are expected to conduct original research. They are expected to produce a well-written analytical essay by the end of their senior year. They will also present on their research at the RST's UG Research Colloquium in Spring 2025.

4. What is the timeframe for the senior thesis?

Students will begin work on the thesis in the Spring quarter of their junior year.

SQ 24 | Initial meeting and orientation. Draft abstracts of research project and assignment of faculty mentors

FQ 24 | Research and completion of an annotated bibliography. Redraft the abstract based on the research.

WQ 25 | Draft 1 of thesis due

SQ 25 | Revision of thesis. Submission of thesis and presentations

5. How long is the thesis?

A senior thesis usually is 25-35 pages. It will include an abstract and a bibliography. Students are expected to follow a standard citation format (MLA, Chicago)

6. How should I enroll for the thesis?

All students will enroll in 1 unit of RST 198 in FQ 24, WQ 25 and SQ 25. This is the group independent study course.

In addition, students will enroll in **3 units** of RST 199 in FQ 24, WQ 25 and SQ 25. This is the individual independent study undertaken with your faculty mentor.

Students who are undertaking an Honors Thesis (eligibility determined by GPA) will enroll for **3 units** of RST 194H-A (FQ 24), RST 194H-B (WQ 25) and RST 199 (SQ 25).

Please speak to Amy Lowrey (allowrey@ucdavis.edu) about the requisite GPA for an Honors Thesis.

7. What are the expectations?

Students must participate in the group meetings. These group meetings are meant to facilitate conversations between students and are intended to help you build an intellectual community.

Students must also plan to meet regularly with their faculty mentor. It is the student's responsibility to set up the meetings with your faculty mentor. Expect to meet your faculty mentor weekly for at least 1 hour.

Students are expected to complete each part of the thesis by the deadlines assigned each quarter. In addition, students will make short presentations based on their research at the RST UG Colloquium in SQ 25. Although it is not required, we encourage students to present their research at UC Davis' Undergraduate Research Conference in SQ 25.

Students will be asked to provide a photograph, a brief bio, a project title and abstract to be posted to the RST page. This will be due in early Fall 2024.

8. Research Support

Students writing a senior thesis will form a cohort called "RST Scholars." As part of this program, thesis writers will receive \$500.00 each in research support.