Honors Thesis Guidelines

I. Introduction

- What is your topic?
- Why is this topic important to examine?
- Explain why this is an important sociological issue
- What are the key debates or arguments regarding this issue? What perspective will your thesis address?
- Summarize the main research question(s) you will answer
- If applicable, what are your hypotheses? What are your null hypotheses?
- What is your thesis, or main finding?

II. Literature Review

- Discuss previous research on your topic of study (organize by major themes rather than discussing each study in list form)
- What are the core themes that categorize previous research in this area?
- What is lacking in the research on this topic?
- How are previous studies related to your study? How is yours different?
- How will your study borrow or challenge major theoretical arguments, methodological choices, or interpretations found in previous research?
- Summarize the key points from the literature about your topic

III. Methods, Sources of Data, and Logic of Inquiry

- Describe the method that you will use to gather data
- How will methods used in previous studies inform your data collection process?
- Describe the logic that you will use in your thesis: inductive, deductive, combination of inductive and deductive
- What ethical issues are important to consider for your study?
- Describe the wording, ordering, and overall construction of any survey or structured interview questions you may ask
- What data applications you will be using (SPSS, STATA, ATLASti, MAXQDA, etc.)
- If applicable, what variables will you be using? Which will be your dependent and independent variables? How were these variables created?
- If you are conducting ethnography, how did you identify your field site?
    - How did you gain access?
    - How did you build rapport with informants?
    - Describe your field note taking process

o   Describe your coding process and categories; did they change in the process of your analysis?
- If you are using an existing date source
  o   Describe why you selected this source
  o   How were data gathered by the source?
- Discuss the strengths and limitations of your method

IV. Data

- Describe your findings in detail
- If you were testing a hypothesis, do your results support your hypothesis? Can you reject the null hypothesis?
- Include comprehensive support in the form of tables and graphs or quotes and descriptions

V. Analysis

- Explain the importance of your findings – what do they mean?
- How do your findings fit in with or add to the existing literature?
- How do your findings address theoretical issues you noted in the literature review?
- How do your findings add to the research on your topic?
- What debates or arguments do your findings support?

VI. Conclusion

- Summarize your study's main findings
- What are some potential implications of your research topic for theoretical, empirical, and/or policy-relevant knowledge?
- Detail the limitations of your study and how you might improve it in the future
- Discuss future research that may arise from your findings

VII. References

VIII. Appendices (if applicable)