

| <b>Table 1. The senior thesis rubric</b>   |   |   |  |   |
|--|---|---|--|---|
|  | <b>Level 1</b>  | <b>Level 2</b>  | <b>Level 3</b>   | <b>Level 4</b>  |
| <b>Focal question or hypothesis</b>  | Not clearly stated  | Stated but unfocused, too broad, or too simplistic  | Clearly stated, at an appropriate level of complexity  | Significant and/or creative focus   |
| <b>Rationale/ motivation</b>   | No clear rationale or a weak rationale for the project  | Some rationale presented, begins to motivate the work   | Rationale makes clear why topic is worth investigating   | Persuasive and creative rationale   |
| <b>Approach/ methodology</b>   | Not clear what was done or why, or an inappropriate method                                      | Approach is generally appropriate for the topic   | Clearly described and justified, well-chosen and properly executed                                   | Creative and sophisticated methods  |
| <b>Scholarly context</b>   | Author overrelies on too few sources, or refers to published work without citations             | Author demonstrates some awareness of a range of relevant literature                                | Author demonstrates broad awareness of the literature, including works presenting other perspectives | Author situates own work in a way that makes a contribution or identifies a new direction for investigation |
| <b>Position</b>  | Does not take a clear or defensible position  | States and/or critiques a position that may already be in the literature                            | Effectively supports, tests, extends, or critiques a position that may already be in the literature  | Develops a clear and defensible position of his/her own   |
| <b>Argument</b>  | Weak, invalid, or no argument, perhaps a simple assertion                                       | Some arguments valid and well supported, some not   | Main arguments valid, systematic, and well supported   | Arguments both well supported and genuinely compared to conflicting explanations                            |
| <b>Use of evidence</b>   | Mostly relies on assertions or opinions rather than evidence, or evidence not clearly presented | Some appropriate use of evidence but uneven   | Feasible evidence appropriately selected and not over-interpreted                                    | Fully exploits the richness of the data/ evidence/ideas, and is sufficiently persuasive                     |
| <b>Analytical insight</b>  | Treats related ideas or data as unrelated, or draws weak or unfounded connections               | Begins to establish connections and perceive implications of the material                           | Brings together related data or ideas in productive ways, discusses implications of material         | Develops insightful connections and patterns that require intellectual creativity                           |
| <b>Writing mechanics</b>   |   |   |  |   |
| <b>Grammar, spelling, usage</b>  | Significantly impairs readability   | Frequent or serious errors  | Some minor errors  | Virtually no errors   |
| <b>Organization</b>  | Needs significant reorganization  | Structure is of inconsistent quality, may have choppy transitions, redundancies, or discontinuities | Structure supports the argument, clearly ordered sections fit together well                          | Structure enhances the argument; strong sections, seamless flow   |
| <b>Clarity, style, readability</b>   | Gets in the way of reading for content  | Style is inconsistent or uneven   | Effective prose style, follows relevant scholarly conventions, emergence of voice                    | Mastery of the genre, including elegant style, established voice  |
| If this were a thesis at my institution, I would give it a grade of: A+, A, A–, B+, B, B–, C+, C, C–, D, F |   |   |  |   |