

**Swarthmore College - Department of Educational Studies - 2011  
Rubric for 2-Credit Senior Thesis**

***Students will have a research question that:***

- demonstrates understanding of issues in the fields they choose to study
- bridges the two disciplines of their special major
- is justified using existing literature in the field
- is focused enough to limit the research but broad enough to provide for thoughtful exploration

***Students will design a study that allows them to effectively engage with the research question that:***

- identifies appropriate data collection tools to answer the question
- builds on methods used in the literature reviewed
- completes necessary IRB requests
- collects and/or works with original data
- analyzes data in systematic ways (using literature, data, theoretical frames)

***Students will embed their research in an exploration of appropriate theory and research in the field(s) and:***

- complete a literature review to frame and begin to examine the research question
- explore data in light of existing literature in the field
- identify/construct a conceptual framework that allows for a systematic exploration of the research question

***Students will take a position and develop a strong argument:***

- stating clearly a novel position on the research topic
- using the literature review to frame the argument
- presenting evidence from original data to support their position
- acknowledging alternate positions, anticipating counter-arguments, and addressing why these data best support the argument that s/he has made
- using the argument/position to provide (and motivate) a thread of continuity in each section of paper

***Students will produce an effective paper presenting their study that includes:***

- a statement of the research question
- a literature review that helps to answer the question
- a description of research methods
- an analysis of data
- a discussion of the relationship between this study and prior work in the field
- a reflection on the limitations of the study
- **and uses effective writing techniques that are**
  - grammatically and mechanically correct
  - structurally coherent/well argued