Background: Duke Kunshan University (DKU) is an interdisciplinary institution that grants dual undergraduate degrees, an MOE Chinese degree and a degree from Duke University in Durham, United States. The principal structure of DKU majors is robustly interdisciplinary. No student confines their study to a single discipline (for example, biology or economics). Instead, all students engage in broad inquiry related to a subject or question (for example, political economy or global health) and take a wide variety of courses related to that area (for example, in public policy, history, ethics, or economics). As a result, our graduates are prepared to engage in a wide variety of inquiries using multiple methodologies to address complex issues that require interdisciplinary approaches.

This has implications for our vision and expectations of undergraduate theses and design projects, which reflect this broad interdisciplinary training. At DKU, every student completes a two-year project known as signature work which consists of multiple interconnected parts including thematic courses, experiential learning, capstones, and a final product. It seeks to integrate students’ interdisciplinary educational experience and culminates in the creation of a product in a scholarly, creative, or applied nature in leu of an undergraduate thesis or design required by JED. Because DKU encourages students to cultivate their independence and creativity as one of its institutional student learning outcomes, the student-led signature work projects often reflect students’ own particular interdisciplinary interests and training. In addition, signature work has an intensive emphasis on problem-solving and skill-development which is much needed for any interdisciplinary inquiry; thus, students’ final products are evidence of transferrable skills that students have acquired and demonstrated through the 2-year program, rather than content knowledge narrowly defined by disciplinary training.

In sum, while the Chinese major declared with any given student might be construed narrowly, the experience of our students is much broader—and intentionally so. This is a distinctive feature of our curriculum, and this distinctiveness results in broadly interdisciplinary submissions from our graduates’ submitting theses or design projects. We have designed this to prepare our students for a wide variety of graduate programs in China and the West, where interdisciplinary training is a competitive advantage.

**Duke Kunshan University**

**Division of Social Sciences**

**SW theses - Template**

Instructions

* Black text – *Do not delete*. Everything in black stays in the document.
* Red text – *Model text*. Replace with your own text, then change the ink color to black.
* Blue text – *Delete*. The blue text is instructional, providing general guidance for what goes into a particular section.

**Overview**

The Title Page, Table of Contents, and Abstract, are the first three pages of the document.[[1]](#footnote-1) The Table of Contents as (i), and the Abstract as (ii). (The title page does not include a page number). You may include a single-page Acknowledgements/Dedication and/or Appendix/ces. The acknowledgements or dedication, if included, should be numbered (iii), with the Table of Contents becoming (iv). The appendix/ces or supplemental content pages should follow the source/works cited. The appendix or supplemental content pages should continue with the Arabic numbering. All page numbers must be bottom centered. See next section for an example outline of the document.

All Signature Work projects in the Social Sciences must have sections entitled Introduction and Conclusion. The body of the text must clearly situate the research in relation to a relevant body of literature. However, given the disciplinary and methodological breadth in the social sciences, there are no prescriptions for how the body of the text should be structured. We suggest using the headings to Theories and Methods and Discussion. In consultation with your SW mentors, you may wish to divide the body of the text into chapters or subheadings (e.g., Analysis, Data, etc.) that correspond to the specifics of your project and argument.

Title page

* Title written in ALL CAPS
* The title is centered at the top of the page
* The title cannot exceed three lines
* The word ‘by’ is on its own line
* Your name should be capitalized in its regular way
* The phrases ‘Signature Work submitted for’ are to remain as is
* Enter the date of submission with normal capitalization as Month, Day, Year

Table of Contents

* The table of contents should be left justified, each chapter should be noted, including the page number.

**THIS IS AN INSTRUCTIONAL PAGE.DELETE BEFORE SUBMISSION.**

THESIS TITLE THAT EXTENDS OVER ONE LINE GOES IN INVERTED PYRAMID FORM

by

First Name\_Last Name

Signature Work Product, in partial fulfilment of the Duke Kunshan University Undergraduate Degree Program

*{Enter date of submission with normal capitalization as Month, Day, Year}*

Signature Work Program

Duke Kunshan University

APPROVALS

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*Mentor: First Name, Last Name and Division (without abbreviations) using normal capitalization*

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*Co-Mentor: First Name, Last Name and Division (without abbreviations) using normal capitalization (Please delete this section if you do not have a co-mentor)*

**ABSTRACT**

*150 – 200 words*. *An abstract is a brief statement of the problem or the purpose of the research and/or creative project. It should indicate the theoretical work or method used, summarize principal findings or results, and point out major conclusions or reflections. This should be the section you write last to be sure that it accurately reflects the content of the document.*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*Individuals and organizations who helped with the project and provided financing are thanked in a paragraph of the thesis. Do not include individual titles in the acknowledgments. However, it is appropriate to state grant numbers and sponsors. Examples would like SELF, SRS, SW Grants, HRC Lab, etc.*

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LIST OF TABLES

[Table 1 Parameters for the optimization of the principal component analysis for olive oil adulteration 10](#_Toc93020061)

*First add captions to your Tables. Right-click on the text above and select Update Field to update this list. Word then searches the document for your captions and automatically adds a list of tables, sorted by page number. The captions must be formatted as in the DNAS SW Style Guide*.

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[Figure 1 The notorious BTC (Brandon the Cat) 10](#_Toc93020444)

*First add captions to your figures. Right-click on the text above and select Update Field to update this list. Word then searches the document for your captions and automatically adds a list of figures, sorted by page number. The captions must be formatted as in the DNAS SW Style Guide*.

INTRODUCTION

*This section includes a clear statement of the research problem, guiding questionsand rationale for developing this project. Provide a detailed yet concise background discussion of the problem and the significance, scope, and limits of the work. Briefly situate your work in relation to a socio-cultural or political issue and outline what has been done previously by citing the most pertinent literature. You do not need to include a general survey of the literature here, which will be covered in the body of your text.  State how your work differs from earlier work in the field and demonstrate the continuity from the previous work to your own.*

THEORIES AND METHODS

*This section is obviously discipline specific so use the nomenclature that is common for your discipline. However, this section should provide sufficient detail about the sources, theories, and the methods employed in your study. Discuss the appropriate literature used in the research and how your research fits within this literature. What methods do you use? What theoretical approaches and literature does your work engage with? If you use social research methods (quantitative or qualitative), how do these relate to the analysis of literature? Here, you may need to define key terms for the reader.*

MAIN DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS/FINDINGS

*Outline here what you found in relation to your research questions or hypotheses, presented in written text, figures, and illustrations. This is where your argument takes shape, and should have sufficient detail to justify your conclusions. Your discussion and analysis should relate your specific findings to the previous research or theory discussed in the previous section. This section might be renamed with sub-chapter headings relevant to your project’s topic, e.g. ‘Why cats love ice cream’, ‘Which ice creams cats especially love’. Extensive illustrations or tables that are relevant to your discussion, may need to be reserved for an appendix.*

*Illustrations, tables, or figures—if limited—can follow after the paragraph in which referenced. Titles/captions should be kept brief. Example below.*

*(Replace with your figure)*

Figure 1 The notorious BTC (Brandon the Cat)

*This section is also where you interpret and compare your results. The objective is to point out the features and limitations of the work. Relate your results to current knowledge in the field and to the original purpose for undertaking the project.*

CONCLUSIONS

*This section is written to put the interpretation of the results into the context of the original problem.  Do not repeat the discussion points or include irrelevant material. The conclusion should be based on the evidence presented. Restate the main research findings. You may also wish to outline amenable areas of future research that your study has revealed.*

REFERENCES

*Many bibliographic styles are acceptable for publications in the Social Sciences. Consult your advisor for a Style Guide. Once you decide on a Style Guide (e.g. APA, Harvard, etc.) assure that all entries are consistent with the designated guide.*

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: **APPENDIX TITLE**

1. Thesis written in software other than MS Word (e.g., Latex) should also follow this guide. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)