

QSS Thesis Experience, 2018 Kendall Ernst

Hi! I'm Kendall, I was an '18 QSS major and I wrote my senior thesis with Professor Rogers in the Sociology department.

What I Did:

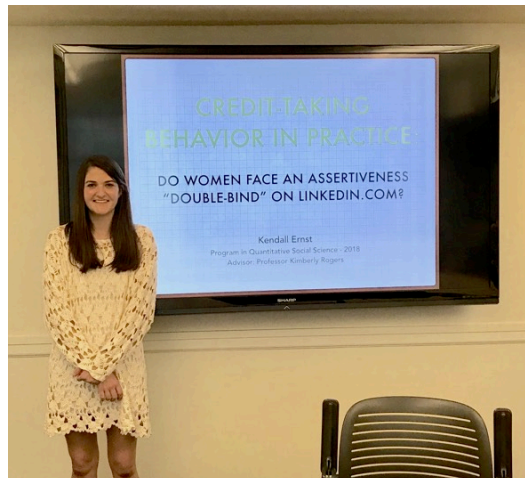
For my thesis, I analyzed the language that men and women use when discussing their achievements on LinkedIn.com. I also looked into how people perceived different styles of credit taking when assessing a job candidate. In order to do so, I designed two studies and collected my own data via Amazon Mechanical Turk.

Why I Did It:

I fulfilled my QSS major with classes that were primarily methods-oriented (and kind of all over the place in terms of department), so I saw writing a thesis as an opportunity to try to synthesize those things in a long-term project. It was also required 😊.

Lessons Learned:

Writing a thesis was an incredibly valuable experience for me. I really enjoyed being able to work closely with my advisor, and it was fun to meet with other majors and hear about their projects as well. I think that going through the research process from start to finish taught me more than I could've learned from just my classes alone, and I think it's especially important for anyone considering grad school later on. Being able to produce a piece of work that I felt proud of was extremely rewarding, and presenting it was a really nice way to wrap up senior year. I'm really happy I wrote a thesis, and I highly recommend it!



Look, it's me presenting! So happy!

General Advice:

- If you're not excited about your prospectus topic, scrap it now. You're going to be thinking about this topic all year, so write on something you're excited to learn more about.
- Choose a thesis advisor who can direct you to the prior literature related to your topic. I had only taken one sociology class freshmen fall, so having someone to direct me toward sources was incredibly helpful. You will have a lot of resources within QSS to help with the math and coding aspects, so don't worry about that too much when selecting an advisor.
- Meet with your advisor often. I met with Professor Rogers about every 1-2 weeks, and it really helped me stay accountable and meet deadlines throughout the project.
- Think critically about your classes in the fall. You may be applying for jobs, and you also are likely going to be taking three classes on top of your thesis. If you can take a lighter term, this is the time to do it—being able to dedicate a lot of time to the literature review you turn in at the end of the term will make your life *vastly* easier for the rest of the year.

Data Collection Advice: *If you're planning on collecting your own data.*

- Choose an advisor (or consult with a different professor) who has done research using similar data collection methods. They will be able to provide a lot of guidance as you are conducting interviews, designing experiments/surveys, etc.
- Do your IRB training and CITI training right away, and try to submit your forms for IRB approval a couple weeks before the end of the term. This is important because you can't start collecting anything until you hear back, and it can take a few weeks.
- Look at funding opportunities as soon as possible. There are a number of resources available besides the Senior Honors Thesis Grants, but they have earlier deadlines. Since there are a lot of QSS majors this year, the senior grants may be smaller than the amount you ask for.