Procedure for Correcting Manuscripts and Theses

You will be writing documents as part of your graduate program. In particular, you will prepare a thesis or dissertation, and you will hopefully also prepare a manuscript based on your work. Both theses and manuscripts have their own special set of formatting requirements. The Graduate School dictates many formatting requirements for a thesis/dissertation, while a specific journal has its own set of instructions which need to be followed before a manuscript is acceptable for submission. A good strategy is to use a previous thesis or manuscript as a template for whatever you prepare. Please have me send you an example of previous work for you to use as guidance.

After you have prepared a draft of your manuscript or thesis and sent it to me, I will typically use "Track Changes" in Word and return it to you with a host of corrections and comments. Track Changes is enabled/disabled from Word as a toggle through the "Review" tab. Note that also on this tab are "Accept", "Reject" and "New Comment".

The purpose of my using Track Changes and Comments is to communicate with you. For each change I make via Track Changes, you should carefully consider the changes I propose. You can "Accept" a change, or you can "Reject" a change. Or, you can modify a change I propose, for example by writing an entirely new sentence or section. However, my use of Track Changes is an attempt to communicate with you that something about your writing which I don't understand or which is simply wrong. Thus, merely rejecting the change will likely not be acceptable. The purpose of my using Track Changes instead of outright changing the text is so that you learn how to write. Comments are similarly a way to communicate with you, often in cases where simply changing the text is inadequate. My hope is that through each iteration a given document will be improved, and that each subsequent document you prepare will require fewer changes.

When you prepare a revised document, please do not add new Track Changes. After just one or two iterations, a document filled with several layers of Track Changes (and Comments, too) becomes quite confusing and unreadable. Instead, I would like you to send me a revised document without any Track Changes. Also, you may delete a Comment if you feel that your response was adequately provided within the text. Alternatively, if a particular Comment requires a more detailed explanation from you, you can modify the text and then add your own Comment in response to my Comment. *The bottom line is that I would like to have a fairly "fresh" draft the document on each iteration that I review it.*

Another situation occurs when a manuscript has been submitted to a journal and we obtain "reviewers' comments". For any journal, a submitted manuscript is distributed to 2-3 reviewers who assess the quality of the work and offer a critique. A manuscript might be outright rejected. If the Editor believes that the manuscript has merit and could potentially be published, he/she will ask us to make a point-by-point response to the reviewers' criticisms. The first time you have a manuscript reviewed, I will write the response and edit the manuscript, typically in red font so that the changes are obvious to you and to the Editor. I may ask your advice on a specific criticism, but I ask that you focus only on that point. Once I have completed my responses and manuscript edit, I will send you the revised manuscript for your review and ask if my responses and the revised manuscript are acceptable. This review will be your chance to learn my

approach for revising manuscripts, and to check the revised text for correctness and understandability. If you have the chance to submit more than one manuscript based on your research, I will probably have you write the revised manuscript and responses from the second manuscript and beyond.

For editing theses/dissertations, manuscript and revised manuscripts, the underlying principal is that *only one person should be editing a document at a time*. Having two people work on a draft of any document at the same time is very ineffective. Once you send me a draft, please make no additional changes on it as I review it. Similarly, once I send you a version, I am not going to complete any additional work on the document until you have completed your review.