

## HC 300: Thesis Seminar Spring 2014

**Instructor:** Dr. Eric Gruver and Dr. Raymond Green

**Time & Location:** W 6-7 p.m. or F 1-2 p.m. PC Media Room

**Office Phone #:** 903-468-3001

**Office Hours & Email:** Normal business hours 8:30-4:30 (appt preferred)

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### **Purpose**

This course is designed to prepare you (both psychologically and pragmatically) for the Honors Thesis experience. By the end of this semester you should have a thesis advisor and a draft of a proposal completed. Throughout the course you will be exposed to nuts and bolts type information on what it will take to complete your thesis. Perhaps more importantly, however, you should leave this class understanding what a thesis “looks like.”

### **Textbook**

None. However, we suggest that you gather the following resources:

*The Elements of Style.* William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White

The appropriate style manual for your discipline, whether that is APA (there is a new 6<sup>th</sup> edition), MLA, or Chicago/Turabian.

### **Grading**

**University-required Online Research Training:** Anyone (faculty and students) performing research affiliated with Texas A&M University-Commerce must complete at least two modules of online training before performing any research study. The training can be found by clicking <https://www.citiprogram.org/Default.asp?>. Students will create a new account (“New Users Register Here”) and then select TWO separate training courses based on the student’s major and/or thesis project field of study. *Students must complete both training sessions and submit printed reports showing completion, and students who do not complete this training will receive an F in the course even if all other assignments are submitted.* Finally, students cannot defend a thesis proposal until they successfully complete the online training and HC 300. Let me know if you have any questions as you begin and/or work through the training modules. **Total: 20%**

*Some Guidelines for Completing Online Training:*

1. Students working with Human Subjects must complete the training described in Question 1 based on the research topic (choose one; not necessarily your major).
  - a. **Biomedical** = Anybody (faculty or students) doing anything that involves human subjects and ANY medical procedure no matter how minimal (blood draws, stress and endurance tests, etc.). The primary department we have on campus concerned with biomedical research is the Health, Kinesiology, and Sports

- department, although some work in Industrial Engineering also falls into this category. This sort of research is rarely if ever considered minimal risk.
- b. Social & Behavioral = Anybody (faculty or students) doing any social science methodology (including people in other departments doing questionnaires, surveys, interviews) that focus on human beings' behaviors in the broadest sense of the word. Behaviors including beliefs, attitudes, etc. Some of this research falls into the “minimal” risk category, depending in large part on the nature of the questions.
  - c. Minimal risk = Students (honors, thesis, dissertation) who are working with adult population (18 and over) who are NOT in any of the groups required to be under Full Board review (i.e. they are \*not\* working with pregnant women, prisoners, or minors) , and who are doing basic surveys/questionnaires that do not require collecting personal or identifying information that require considerations regarding confidentiality or anonymity. Personal information: age, sex, gender, etc. Identifying information: name, address, etc). Not applicable to faculty.
  - d. Data or Laboratory Specimens = The data refers to data collected by other entities and available for use (archives, public records, etc.). This category could be faculty or students.
2. Students not working with Human Subjects can skip question 1 of the online training and go directly to question 2. You must choose the field that best matches your research topic (again, not necessarily your major). Same four headings listed in item 1 above.
  3. All students must complete Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) in Question 2.
  4. Complete Question 3 if working with any of the listed species.

Advisor Contract: You and your advisor will be required to sign a “contract” that delineates the ground rules for your partnership (e.g., how frequently you will meet, order of authorship on conference presentations or published papers). *A hard copy of the signed contract must be submitted by the due date listed in the Schedule of Activities or the student CANNOT pass the course.* **Total: 20%**

Time Line and Needs List: Perhaps the most important thing that you can do for yourself is to construct a timeline for completing the project. When do you expect to complete the proposal? When will you defend it? Are you collecting subjects – if so how long will that take? Do you need to obtain ethical approval (e.g., Institutional Review Board, Animal Care Board)? Do you need to have a lab purchase equipment for you? As you do your timeline you should also be able to generate a list of what you will need to complete the project. This list should include both tangible (e.g., lab equipment, participants, written sources) and less tangible requirements (e.g., four hours a week to collect data, etc.) *Please submit a paper copy of this assignment.* **Total: 20%**

Draft of your Proposal: Your final task for this class is to complete, in concert with your advisor, a draft of your proposal. This draft does not need to be polished, but it should contain a thesis statement, a rudimentary literature review, and a first crack at your methodology. In contrast to your actual Honors Thesis proposal which will be 8-10 pages in length, this draft should only be in the 3-5 page range. *Students who do not submit a rough draft of the proposal CANNOT pass HC 300.* *Please submit a paper copy of this assignment.* **Total: 40%**

Online Research Training	20% (not submitted by due date = F course grade)
Advisor Contract	20% (not submitted by due date = F course grade)
Timeline/Needs	20%
Proposal Draft	<u>40%</u> (not submitted by due date = F course grade)
	100%

Final grades are based on the total number of points earned during the term in accordance, generally, with the following levels of proficiency: A = 90-99; B = 80-89; C = 70-79; D = 65-69; F = below 65. Remember, however, that failure to submit the online training, an advisor contract, or a proposal draft will result in an F in the course.

### **Other important information**

**Attendance and Student Behavior:** Because we do not meet class each week, attendance should not be an issue. With that said, you are not allowed more than ONE absence this semester. If you accumulate more than one absence, you will not be provided with credit for the class. Additionally, “all students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment.” (See Student’s Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct). **Turn off all cell phones and pagers, and texting during class is forbidden.**

**Students with Disabilities:** The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services  
Gee Library, Room 132  
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835  
Fax (903) 468-8148  
StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

**Finally,** use us as resources. We have directed countless Honors and Masters theses, so keep us involved. Our job is to steer you clear of trouble and to make the process easier (Not easy mind you! Just easier!).

## Schedule of Activities

<u>Week</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Note</u>
1/13	Class Introduction	
1/20	What is a thesis?	
1/27	Library Resources	Library Classroom (2 <sup>nd</sup> floor)
2/3	Brainstorming	
2/10	Individual Meetings	Office
2/17	Individual Meetings	Office
<b>Friday, February 21</b>	<b>Online Research Training Report Due (hard copies)</b>	
2/24	Individual Meetings	
3/3	Individual Meetings	<b>Advisor Contract Due</b>
3/10	SPRING BREAK	
3/17	What's Next?	
3/24	Individual Meetings	Office
3/31	Individual Meetings	Office
4/7	Sharing Ideas	<b>Timeline and Needs List Due</b>
4/14	Individual Meetings	Office
4/21	Individual Meetings	Office
4/28	Individual Meetings	Office
5/5	<b>Proposal Draft Due</b>	