

# **PSY 622-01W**

## **Residency: Introduction to Theses and Dissertations**

**Summer I, 2020**

**Web-Based Class**

**Instructor: Dr. Benton H. Pierce**

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### **Benton Pierce**

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**Office Hours:** By appointment only

This course orients students to the nature of graduate education and the processes of thesis and dissertation development.

**Purpose of Course and Course Objectives:** This course attempts to address some of the major problems in graduate education. The primary symptom of that problem is an unacceptably high proportion of graduate students who complete their coursework, but fail to complete their theses or dissertations, and therefore fail to obtain their degree. Clearly, there are a variety of factors that contribute to this phenomenon. This course will address several likely causes. These include students' failure to understand the components and purposes of graduate education, students' perception that successful completion of coursework is their first priority, and their belief that thesis/dissertation topics are products to be created from personal observations to solve pressing social or personal problems. At the conclusion of this course, students should (1) understand the thesis/dissertation requirements of the graduate program, (2) have the skills to select a thesis or dissertation topic area, and (3) be able to read and abstract original source materials and create a pre-proposal that if expanded, might satisfy the requirements for a thesis or dissertation proposal.

## Course Materials:

- Stanovich, K. E. (2010). *How to think straight about psychology*. (9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> edition). Boston; Allyn & Bacon.
- Dunn, D. S. (2011). *A short guide to writing about psychology*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Boston: Longman (Recommended, but not required).
- In addition, it is important that you have the APA publication manual. There is a new 7<sup>th</sup> edition now available, but the 6<sup>th</sup> edition will do for this course.

**Assignments and Examinations:** There will be no examinations. The only gradable assignment will be a “pre-proposal” to be submitted by the end of the course, which I will edit and return to you for further refinement. There will be several activities that must be completed before work on a pre-proposal can begin. These include: (1) discussions of the components of graduate education; (2) exercises in methods of selecting a research topic; (3) exercises in reading original research; (4) exercises in generating testable research questions; and (5) discussions of the etiquette of the thesis and dissertation processes.

**Grading:** All students will initially receive an incomplete for the course. After I have edited the proposals and provided feedback, you will be responsible for incorporating my changes and suggestions and returning your proposal to me for final grading. To receive an A in the course, your final proposal needs to satisfy two criteria. First, it must be judged to be a viable research study that if expanded, might become a thesis or dissertation. To be viable, the proposal must be based upon established research literature, propose empirically testable questions, propose the use of methods (i.e., participants, materials, and procedures) that are appropriate and justified, and propose the use of analytic methods that are appropriate to the question and type of data. Second, your proposal needs to be written in established APA format with all of the suggested changes incorporated and my questions addressed.

**Your Pre-Proposal:** Your proposed study needs to be one that is either a true experiment or a quasi-experiment. For a true experiment, you will be manipulating one or more independent variables to determine their effect(s) on your dependent variable or variables of interest. For a quasi-experiment, your study will examine group differences (e.g., younger vs. older adults, extraverts vs. introverts) on some dependent variable or variables of interest. I would prefer that you propose a true experiment, but if you identify in the literature a need to conduct a quasi-experiment, I will consider it. A proposal that is either purely descriptive or correlational in nature will not be approved.

## Schedule of Assignments:

### Date:

June 1	Introductions, Program Orientation, Class Purposes (Handout)
June 2	Reading Original Research & Selecting Research Topics
June 3	Evaluating Original Research
June 4	Discussion of Research Topics
June 8	Generating Researchable Questions (Handout)
June 9	Generating Researchable Questions (continued)
June 10	Writing tips
June 11	Presenting and Defending Research Questions
June 15	Proposals Overview
June 16	Turn in pre-proposal
August 3	Final revision of pre-proposal due

**Attendance:** Class participation is essential to understanding the content of this course. Therefore, I expect you to be able to participate in our Zoom discussions every day. If you will be late in joining the meeting or have to leave early, please let me know ahead of time. If you completely absent more than once, you will be asked to drop the class. If you drop the class, you must fill out a drop slip and contact the Registrar. Telling the instructor your intentions is not sufficient.

## Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement

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**

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Director: Ms. Sandi Patton

Gee Library- Room 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: [studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu](mailto:studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu)

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

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Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

### **Campus Concealed Carry Statement**

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

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