

PSY 622-01P

Residency: Introduction to Theses and Dissertations

Summer I, 2022; 8 a.m – Noon

Henderson Hall – 202

Instructor: Dr. Benton H. Pierce

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*. (9th or 10th edition). Boston; Allyn & Bacon.
- Dunn, D. S. (2011). *A short guide to writing about psychology*. (3rd ed.). Boston: Longman (Recommended, but not required).
- In addition, it is important that you have access to the APA publication manual. There is a new 7th edition now available, but the 6th 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 6	Introductions, Program Orientation, Class Purposes (Handout)
June 7	Reading Original Research & Selecting Research Topics
June 8	Evaluating Original Research
June 9	Discussion of Research Topics
June 13	Generating Researchable Questions (Handout)
June 14	Generating Researchable Questions (continued)
June 15	Writing tips
June 16	Presenting and Defending Research Questions
June 20	Proposals Overview
June 21	Turn in pre-proposal
August 3	Final revision of pre-proposal due

Attendance: Class participation is essential to understanding the content of this course. If you will be late in joining the meeting or have to leave early, please let me know ahead of time. If you are 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

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

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

Nondiscrimination Notice

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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>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

Academic Conduct & Honesty. University policy states that “All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment.” Cheating and plagiarism of all forms will not be tolerated. Do not copy and/or turn in other people’s work. Do not allow other people to utilize your own good work. If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes cheating please see me. [Consult the *University Catalog* and *Students Guidebook* for policies concerning Academic Honesty and disruptive behavior.]