

HC 300: Thesis Seminar

Fall 2025

Instructor: Brittney Yager, MS

Time & Location: Tuesdays at 8am, Ed South 129

Office Phone #: 903-468-3067

Office Hours & Email: Normal business hours 8:00-4:30 (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. However and perhaps more importantly, you should leave this class understanding what a thesis “looks like.”

Learning Outcomes

1. Students will begin the process of engaging in undergraduate research, a high-impact practice as defined by AAC&U. By the end of the course, students will have identified and secured a faculty thesis advisor to lead their research, a key component of the undergraduate research process.
2. Students will complete research trainings regarding research ethics and responsible conduct of research, as well as potentially human subjects training or animal use training. Students will pass trainings at a threshold of 80% or better.
3. Students will complete a rough draft of their thesis proposal, an interdisciplinary writing intensive assignment with oversight of the faculty advisor. At minimum, students will begin a literature review, construct a thesis statement, and begin formulating methodology.

Textbook

No textbooks are required, but the following may help you through your thesis process and are thus suggested.

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

The appropriate style manual for your discipline, whether that is APA (7th edition), MLA, or Chicago/Turabian. There are many free online resources for these manuals.

All assignments, schedules, and due dates are subject to change by the instructor.

Grading:

All assignments must be submitted via D2L unless otherwise noted. Please do not email assignments.

Attendance: Because we do not meet class each week, attendance should not be an issue. With that said, you are not allowed more than two absences this semester. If you accumulate more than two absences, you will not be provided with credit for the class. If you are ill, please let me know as soon as possible.

University-required Online Research Training: Anyone (faculty and students) performing research affiliated with Texas A&M University-Commerce must complete their online research training before performing any research study. The directions at this link (<http://www.tamuc.edu/Research/compliance/training/ResponsibleConductInstructions.aspx>) do an excellent job of walking you through the process. Students will select one or two separate training courses based on the student's major and/or thesis project field of study. Students must complete the appropriate 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. Let us know if you have any questions as you begin and/or work through the training modules.

Total: 20%

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 template will be provided. *A copy of the contract must be submitted with both signatures 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? Do you hope to present the research at a conference before you apply to graduate school? 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.)

Total: 10%

Plagiarism Certificate: Plagiarism is a serious offense with lasting consequences. You will visit <https://www.indiana.edu/~istd/> for a tutorial on “How to Recognize Plagiarism”. Visit each section on the left hand side, including IU Definition, Overview, Cases, Examples, and Practice. Once you feel you have mastered the material, take the Certification Test. Your age group is “I’m an undergraduate college student or advanced high school student”. You will need to register an account to take the test, using a valid email address. When you pass the test, your certificate will be emailed to you. Upload this to D2L.

Total: 10%

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 8-12 pages in length, this draft need only be in the 3-5 page range. ***Students who do not submit a rough draft of the proposal CANNOT pass HC 300.***

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	10%
Plagiarism Certificate	10%
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.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

University Specific Procedures

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the Student Guidebook.

<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

TAMUC Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the Attendance webpage and Procedures 13.99.99.R0.01

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03

Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/documents/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf>

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

Velma K. Waters Library Rm 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

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>

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.

A&M-Commerce Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.tamuc.edu/counsel

AI use policy

Texas A&M University-Commerce acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course.

Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism).

Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructors' guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed.

In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

13.99.99.R0.03 Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty

AI is not permitted in the construction or generation of content for any written assignment in this course. You may use AI tools for brainstorming and ideating.

Course Calendar

On all days marked “individual meetings”, students are expected to work independently on their assignments while appointments are available as needed. Students are required to meet with me for one individual meeting between 9/16 and 10/14 as well as between 10/22 and 12/3. Signups for these meetings will be sent out closer to then.

Each assignment is due Tuesday of the week indicated by 7:59am (before class) unless otherwise noted.

<u>Week Of</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Note</u>
8/26	Class Introduction	
9/2	What is a thesis?	
9/9	Brainstorming	Plagiarism Certificate due 9/10
9/16	Campus Resource (TBD)	
9/23	Sources and Bias	
9/30	Individual Meetings	
10/7	Individual Meetings	
10/14	What is next?	Advisor Contract due 10/15
10/21	What is a research proposal?	
10/28	Individual Meetings	
11/4	Individual Meetings	Online Research Trainings due 11/5
11/11	Developing Ideas	
11/18	Mock Proposal Defenses	Timeline and Needs List due 11/19
11/25	Individual Meetings	
12/2	Individual Meetings	
12/9	Proposal Draft Due 12/10	

The instructor will notify the class accordingly of schedule changes.

