Instructor:

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Office Hours: Wednesday 2:00-4:00 and by appointment

Course Overview

The goal of this course is to write and defend your honors thesis. This course is the third course in the required four-semester (12 required credit hours) honors program sequence. You will follow the outline developed in the last course in this sequence to write each section of the thesis, provide feedback to fellow students on their work, and prepare and deliver a presentation summarizing your thesis.

Class Format

Much of the class will operate as an independent study, as students write and rewrite sections of their thesis. However, we will use a structured peer review process in which students will provide feedback to each other on sections of the thesis.

All writing assignments will be need to be submitted for peer reviewers by **4:00 p.m. the Wednesday** of the assignment date. Peer reviewers will be required to submit their comments by 4:00 p.m. the following Friday. After editing the work based on peer feedback, students will submit the revised section by 4:00 p.m. the following Wednesday.

Finally, students will be expected to defend their thesis in a presentation to the class.
Honors Thesis

This will be a research proposal, and will include a full literature review that provides a persuasive case that the chosen research question has not yet been answered in rigorous research and is worthy of empirical attention. The proposal then describes the data and methods that will be used to answer the question. You may propose to collect ‘primary’ data, in which case you will explain and justify a sampling strategy, data collection method, and measures. You may also propose to use ‘secondary’ data, in which case you will identify the data set, justify that it is appropriate, and argue how the fundamental concepts are captured by measures in the data set. Then you must explain how the data will be analyzed and how this analysis will answer the question. Finally, the thesis ends with a critical consideration of the likely implications of the research, limitations of their proposal, and directions for future work. (~30 pages).

You will be expected to turn in drafts of your final thesis in four parts:

I) Statement of the Problem and Description of It
II) Literature Review/Research Questions
III) Methods: Measures, Sample and Proposed Analysis
IV) Limitations, Summary and Conclusions

When you hand in each part of your thesis, it will be submitted for peer review. I expect that you will incorporate the feedback that you get from both the peer review as well as me into your final product.

Peer Review (20% of final grade)

For each part of the assignment, you will receive another student’s assignment, for which you will be expected to provide constructive and critical feedback. You may prepare comments in any form you wish, but you should aim for 1-2 pages of feedback per each assignment. Students are expected to participate fully in the peer review process.

Thesis Defense (20% of final grade)

Near the end of the semester, you will defend your thesis. Specifically, you will complete a short presentation of your research proposal, during which you must answer questions from colleagues and faculty. I will give you more information on this closer to the dates.

Final Thesis (60% of final grade; cumulative with each stage)

The end-product of this semester is your final thesis, including a final list of references. All of your work has the aim of helping you construct this research proposal. This will be due the final week of classes.
Readings

The primary reading in this course will be of your own choosing. You will be expected to read literature related to your thesis topics throughout the semester. In addition, sections of the following textbook will be assigned:


You should also read the following article for advice on how to conduct your literature review:


Course Policies

Attendance

This course will largely operate as an independent study, and you will need to meet with me periodically throughout the semester. However, attendance is required on presentations days. Please alert me as soon as possible if you must miss a required meeting.

Disability Accommodations

If you have a documented physical or learning disability, I am willing to make the necessary accommodations. Persons with a documented disability requesting reasonable accommodations should contact me by the second week of class. We will then work with Disability Support Services (DSS) to make arrangements with you to determine and implement appropriate academic accommodations.

I am unable to accommodate students who are not registered with Disability Support Services or who do not provide me with documentation that has been reviewed by DSS.

Religious Observances

Any student who anticipates the necessity of being absent from class due to the observation of a major religious observance must provide notice of the date(s) to me, in writing, by the second class meeting. The request should not include travel time.
Make-up Policy

NO LATE WORK IS ACCEPTED. There are a limited number of circumstances under which assignments can be made up: 1) serious illness, 2) a death in the immediate family, 3) religious holiday observance, and 4) circumstances beyond the student’s control. **Advanced notice is required (i.e., prior to missing a class).** Proper written documentation includes an obituary/death notice, an official health center excused absence form, or hospital records. I will not accept a Health Center honor statement to verify an illness. In the event of a court appearance, a copy of the court appearance notification is required. You must see the instructor directly; do not rely on friends or anyone else to contact me on your behalf.

Academic Integrity

All students are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity. Plagiarism, passing other’s work off as your own (e.g., buying or downloading papers or reports), cheating on examinations, submitting fraudulent documents or forged signatures, and so forth will not be tolerated. Students who violate these standards will be reported to the Office of Judicial Programs. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Honor Council, please visit the following website: [www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/whatis.html](http://www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/whatis.html)
Course Schedule and Milestones

September 2 – Class Introduction

September 9 – No Class Meeting; Individual Meetings
Due: Statement of the Problem and Description of It

September 16 – Class Meeting; Review of the Literature
Due: Read Denny and Tewksbury

September 23 – No Class; Individual Meetings
Due: Literature Review/Research Questions

September 30 – Class Meeting; Preparing Methods Section

October 7 – No Class; Individual Meetings if Necessary
Due: Methods: Measures, Sample and Proposed Analysis

October 14 – Class Meeting; Preparing Your Presentation, Practice Presentations

October 21 – No Class Meeting; Individual Meetings if Necessary
Due: Limitations, Summary and Conclusions

October 28 – In-Class Presentations; Attendance Mandatory

November 4 – In-Class Presentations; Attendance Mandatory

November 11 – Extra Date for Presentations

November 18 – No Class; ASC Meetings in Washington, DC

November 25 – No Class; Thanksgiving

December 2 – Individual Meetings as Necessary

December 9 – Due: Final Written Thesis