

Instructor: Liz Throop
Office hours: Wednesday 10 – 10:45 am
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This course introduces students to the basics of graduate-level research and writing for MFA theses. Three credit hours. The class will be a blend of applied and theoretical writing, including the mechanics of both research and writing. It will

- orient you to library, internet, and other resources.
- provide you with practice in writing about your own artistic process and artwork.
- guide you through the stages of the thesis process, including conceiving, researching, writing, and proofreading.

Requirements:

- Participation in all class sessions.
- Regular use of the blog **Thesis6600.blogspot.com**
- Completion of all assigned individual and group projects, including regular homework.
- Submission of final draft.
- Laptop computer to bring to class when requested.
- Kate Turabian's *A Manual for Writers* is required, though the edition is up to you.

Our discussions are critical sources of information for this class. It is imperative that you arrive punctually and that you attend each session. In order to participate in the class, you must have completed reading assignments and be prepared to discuss them. The class will range well beyond the information found in your readings, including visits to the library and writing studio, and lectures from experts.

Expect short writing projects in class and as homework. These exercises will allow you to work through concepts, synthesize information, and demonstrate what you have learned. The number of homework assignments will increase if it becomes clear that you are not keeping up with reading or are not participating regularly.

Over the course of the semester, you will create, revise, and refine your paper to reflect new research, organization, and your improved use of language and argumentation skills. At the end of the semester you will turn in your latest draft along with three previous drafts (complete with reviewer comments). That "final" draft should include

- 150 word abstract
- Table of contents including three to seven section headings
- Five to nine pages of text including footnotes in proper form
- Draft of your conclusion
- Working bibliography

This syllabus, and the schedule of readings, may change to meet instructional needs without advanced notice. You are responsible for keeping track of any changes made during the semester.

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Grading

Class discussions and activities	30%
Homework/Projects	30
Presentations	10
Written Feedback for classmates	15
Final Paper	15

You must complete ALL assignments, and ALL PARTS of each assignment. Failure to complete ANY of these constitutes failure of the course. The percentages listed are a rough guide only. In order to facilitate a deep learning of subject matter, flexibility in grading may be necessary to meet instructional demands. For example, improvement (or its opposite) may be taken into account when assigning final grades.

Grading Scale: A (94-100); A- (91-93); B+ (87-89); B (84-86); B- (81-83); C+ (77-79); C (74-76); D (70-73); F (0-60)

Attendance

Out of courtesy to your peers and to me, attend classes regularly and arrive promptly. Three or more absences are excessive for a class that meets once per week. Additional absences will lower your grade. If special circumstances make it impossible for you to attend, send a brief email.

Academic Dishonesty

It is essential to this class that you understand what plagiarism is and why it is a problem. When you use another's ideas, wording, or terminology (even if you are paraphrasing them) you MUST properly cite your source. We will discuss these matters during class, but if you have questions regarding what needs to be cited, or how to cite it – feel free to ask by email or during class. Academic dishonesty is a serious matter that will be reported to the university and may result in failure of the class and/or expulsion from GSU. The University is a forum of ideas and using someone else's words or ideas without giving them credit constitutes an act of academic theft.

Disruptive Behavior

It is imperative that everyone in the class feels free to share their work in a positive atmosphere, and that we all treat each other with respect. Students should consult codeofconduct.gsu.edu for the university's policy on disruptive behavior. Students who disrupt class will be asked to leave and may be removed from the course.

If your use of a digital device becomes distracting, I will ask you to turn it off. Failure to comply with this, or any other request, will constitute an episode of disruptive behavior.

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Date	In Class	Before next class
Aug 28	Introduction, overview, what you hope to get from writing your thesis; from this class. Organize into teams.	Draft a 100 to 500-word abstract and make a Powerpoint with 3 to 5 visual examples of your work.
Sept 4	5 – 10 minute slideshow of your work. Q/A on Microsoft Word. Discuss abstracts.	Email writing sample or upload to Brightspace. Upload Abstract First Draft to Brightspace by Wednesday night (9/9).
Sept 11	Discuss scheduling meetings with your committee. Discuss how to locate and notate source materials for bibliography.	Write initial bibliography in Turabian format, and upload Initial Bibliography to Brightspace by Wednesday night (9/16). Write initial work plan, including schedule for Fall thesis committee meetings.
Sept 18	Bring printouts of work plan and bibliography to class. Peer-critique your bibliography and work plan. In-class exercise.	Review sample theses and articles (links on class blog). Post Strengths of a Thesis on Brightspace for your classmates by Wednesday night (9/23). Prepare short presentation about a good thesis.
Sept 25	5-minute presentation on your exemplary thesis. <u>Visit library</u> to find out about researching.	Write about Obstacles and post it on Brightspace by Wednesday night (9/30). Read at least one Obstacle of a classmate's by class time.
Oct 2	Class discussion on Obstacles. Discuss organizing source materials and making use of them.	Write an initial Table of Contents , including 3 -7 section headings and 1 - 2 sentences about each section, and post it on Brightspace by Wednesday night (10/7).
Oct 9	Class discussion on working with thesis committees. Discuss Outlines and organizing your text. Guest speaker.	Write and upload Outline by Wednesday, Oct 14.
Oct 16	Discuss outlines of teammates. Groups will complete progress report for each member to help each others' progress and help instructor gauge class needs. Discuss influences and their context.	Upload Influences by <u>Tuesday</u> , Oct 20. Before next class, read one draft from a classmate who is not in your group and be ready to discuss in class.
Oct 23	Review writing exercise. Discuss plagiarism, paraphrasing, and citations for text and images.	Write three Image Attributions in Turabian form and upload document by Wed, Oct 28. Upload a current draft by Wed, Oct 28. Print out your thesis to date and bring to conference.
Oct 30	Attend 20-minute conference with instructor to review progress.	Write and edit.
Nov 6	Discuss formatting pictures: anchoring; captioning; attributing; using tables for text and visuals.	Insert at least three visual examples with captions (by you or others) into your document, even if they are "placeholder" images. Upload by Wed Nov 4.

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Nov 13	Present a 5 - 10 minute slideshow to class on your main thesis topic or some subtopic. You must present without notes.	Write a draft of your Conclusion , based on what you have done so far and upload by Wed., Nov 18. Assemble your Abstract, TOC, Influences, and Conclusion. Update your Outline to reflect the current draft.
Nov 20	Discuss editing and proofreading.	Upload your latest Draft for teammates and instructor. It should include Abstract, TOC, Influences, and Conclusion. Create a brief slideshow to give an overview of your investigation. EXTRA CREDIT: before the end of the semester, share this slideshow with 5 or more undergrads, grads, or other individuals who are not familiar with your investigation. You must tell instructor when and where this presentation will take place prior to the event, and the event must be documented.
Nov 27	Holiday	Put twelve or more of your footnotes and bibliography items into proper MLA style and upload by Tues, Dec 1. Pay attention to punctuation, italicization, and abbreviations.
Dec 4	Review Citations. Discuss your Abstracts, TOCs, and Conclusions. Discuss Spring Semester goals.	Using the tools you have gained this semester, give your document another edit. Update your TOC and Abstract to reflect your current text. Review your word choices; correct punctuation, grammar, and spelling; sum up and be concise. Upload this document no later than 5 pm Wed, Dec 9.
	I will make every effort to read your latest draft in its entirety before assigning final grade.	