

LCC 4700: Writing an Undergraduate Thesis – SAMPLE Syllabus

This course is intended to guide undergraduate students from all disciplines through the stages of writing their undergraduate theses. Topics include planning, research and documentation, prose style and editing, document design, ethics, summaries, and oral presentations. Because the course will enroll from different disciplines, students will also become acquainted with research topics, ways of framing arguments, and making points outside their fields of study, which will help them develop a more interdisciplinary perspective.

(100% attendance will be required)

Required Texts:

O'Connor, Patricia. *Woe is I: The Grammarphobe's Guide to Better English in Plain English* (2nd ed.)

Tufte, Edward R. "The Cognitive Style of PowerPoint"

William, Joseph M. *Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace* (6th ed.) Longman Press.

On reserve:

Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams *The Craft of Research*; Colomb, Gregory G. and Joseph M. Williams. *The Craft of Argument*; and Tufte, Edward R. *Visual Explanations* and *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information*

Course Objectives

- Construct and follow a stringent but achievable project plan that is agreed upon by the research advisor, the student and the LCC 4697 instructor.
- Compile a literature review that reflects studies that are relevant to the student's thesis, and document these sources in the field-specific format.
- Write and revise drafts to achieve clear and direct prose style, and employ standard editing practices for self- and peer-reviews.
- Design usable documents, including graphic elements.
- Discuss ethical issues ranging from plagiarism and intellectual property to human subjects protocols and public responsibility.
- Produce a summarized version of thesis appropriate to field, audience and purpose.
- Communicate thesis research in an oral presentation.

Topics

Week 1. Introduction to the structure of a research Thesis—different approaches for different disciplines

Week 2. Literature Review—before & after with revision in MSWord "track changes"

Week 3. Work Plan—Hypothesis/Goal—Timeline (followed by conference with research advisor/writing teacher/student)

Week 4. Clear and Direct Prose Style—in-class activity

Week 5. Basic Principles of Document Design—use of headings, subheadings, lists, white space, etc.—in-class activity

Week 6. Integrating Graphical Elements—Standard Practices and Standards of Excellence (maps, figures, tables, referencing in text, labeling)

Week 7. Documenting Sources (formats)—Plagiarism Issues—Intellectual Property & Ethics (lecture/discussion)

Week 8. Ethics: human subjects, animal rights, public responsibility

Week 9. Self Editing and Peer Review

Week 10. Editing Practicum

Week 11. Abstracts, Executive Summaries, Summaries, and White Papers—Distinctions

Week 12. Workshop on Summarizing

Week 13. Oral Presentation Techniques

Week 14. Creating and Delivering Discipline-specific Oral Presentations

Week 15. Describing and Explaining Visuals Orally (+ use Tufte's article on limitations)

Portfolio Analysis

Final Exam: Oral Presentations + Peer Evaluations