COMM 5398 & 5399:
Thesis 1 & 2
CRN: 13465/12522
Fall 2016

General Information
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Office hours: Mondays + Wednesdays 3-4pm, and by appointment

Course Overview
These courses are designed to help you complete your master’s thesis, and are required components for students selecting the thesis option for graduation. The professor assigned to this course may or may not be your thesis advisor, but the professor is there to give you general guidance about completing your master’s thesis. You should also extensively consult with your thesis advisor and committee as you move through the process of completing your thesis.

Course Goals
1. To understand what work a master’s thesis entails, including the development of the proposal and the project itself.
2. To develop a plan of action and timeline for completion of the thesis proposal and the thesis.
3. To provide mentorship and guidance in the thesis writing process.

Departmental Learning Objectives and Outcomes
Learning Objective 1: Graduate students should be able to recognize and articulate the foundational assumptions, central philosophical tenets, and contemporary debates in the field of communication.
   Learning Outcome: Competence in general knowledge of the communication field as exhibited in an effective written literature review.
Learning Objective 2: Graduate students will be able to distinguish and demonstrate the use of qualitative, quantitative, and critical methodologies in applied research projects.
   Learning Outcome: Competence in writing research questions, developing research design, and explaining in written and oral form the methodological approach used for thesis research.
Learning Objective 3: Graduate students will demonstrate proficiency in the oral and written articulation of their discursive ideas.
   Learning Outcome: Competence in presenting in oral form the written thesis proposal and thesis project, as well as submission of both to the graduate school with a successful passing grade for both the proposal and the project.
Learning Objective 4: Graduate students will be able to design, research and complete a thesis project or graduate paper project.
   Learning Outcome: Competence in written and oral form of the thesis as well as the successful defense of thesis proposal and/or project.
Textbook and materials: None required

Course Assignments and Evaluation
This course is a requirement for the communication studies graduate program if you choose the thesis option, which must be completed before you can graduate. The assignments are designed to help you complete your thesis in a timely manner.

1. Initial consultation. In the first week of the semester, you should arrange a meeting with both the professor of this course and your thesis advisor to map out a plan of action for the semester.

2. Plan of action. This plan should include what you will accomplish during the semester and deadlines for completing those tasks. This plan should be approved by both your advisor and the professor for this course by the end of the 2nd week of the semester (see assignment guidelines).

2. Semester meetings (4). In addition to the above assignments, you will be required to attend four meetings during the semester, designed for your professor to check in with you about your project. If you cannot meet during the class session (as listed below), please arrange to meet with the professor individually.

3. Final report. The final report is a short document that outlines what you accomplished during the semester (see assignment guidelines).

Academic Misconduct
The University of Texas El Paso prides itself on its standards of academic excellence and students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, submitting work for credit that is attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, and any act that gives or attempts to give unfair advantage.

Note: If you use more than THREE continuous words from a source (e.g., newspaper article, journal article, academic book), you must use quotation marks and provide the complete citation both in text and in a separate reference list.

Center for Accommodations and Support Services Policy
If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148, or by email to cass@utep.edu. Or visit their office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at www.sa.utep.edu/cass. CASS Staff are the only individuals who can validate and if need be, authorize accommodations for students with disabilities.
Grading
Upon the successful completion and oral defense of the thesis proposal, the professor for this course, in consultation with your thesis advisor, will submit a grade of A or B for COMM 5398. Otherwise, a P, I, or F grade will be assigned. Upon the successful completion and oral defense of the thesis project, the professor for this course, in consultation with your thesis advisor, will submit a grade of A or B for COMM 5399. Otherwise, a P, I, or F grade will be assigned. In rare cases for both courses, a grade of C or D might be assigned, depending on the circumstances. To complete requirements for graduation, COMM 5398 and COMM 5399 must have A or B grades assigned and a change of grade form may be required if a different letter grade is assigned.

Meeting & Assignments Schedule

Week 1: Class meeting #1 (TBD): Review of syllabus and plagiarism policies, meeting with advisor, meeting with professor, and cohort meeting

Week 2: Submission of semester plan of action

Week 3: Class meeting #2 (TBD): Review of graduate school guidelines and forms and cohort meeting

Week 4: Check in with advisor

Week 5: Class meeting #3 (TBD): Progress report and cohort meeting

Week 6: Check in with advisor

Week 7: Class meeting #4 (TBD): Progress report and cohort meeting

Week 8: Check in with advisor

Week 9: Submission of first draft of thesis proposal or thesis project to advisor

Week 10: Check in with advisor

Week 11: Check in with advisor and professor for this course

Week 12: Revisions of thesis proposal or thesis project submitted to advisor

Week 13: Thesis proposal or thesis project submitted to committee

Week 14: Thesis proposal or thesis project defense

Week 15: Submission of final report
Plan of Action Report
You will prepare and provide an plan of action for writing your thesis proposal or project for the semester (no more than two pages). In your plan, please provide at least:

(1) The current/tentative title of your thesis project,
(2) The chair and committee members (and their departments) if any,
(3) An abstract, rationale, or summary of your thesis project/idea,
(4) General research questions,
(5) A discussion of milestones you plan to achieve and respective dates for completion,
(6) Weekly time line for thesis proposal or project completion, and
(7) anticipated/potential challenges ahead and how you plan to address them.

End of Term Thesis Progress Report
You will prepare and provide an end of term Thesis progress report (no more than three pages and single-spaced). In your report, please provide at least:

(1) The current/tentative title of your thesis project,
(2) The chair and committee members (and their departments) if any,
(3) An abstract, rationale, or summary of your thesis project/idea,
(4) General research questions,
(5) A discussion of the milestones or progress you have made/achieved this semester,
(6) Time line for thesis completion (for next semester), and
(7) anticipated/potential challenges ahead and how you plan to address them.