

## IDH 3055 (14591) Honors Thesis Research Methods

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Office hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 11:00 am to 12:00 pm

Additional availability throughout the week, in-person or virtually

**Prerequisites or Corequisites:** None

**Course Credit Hours:** 1

### Course Description

This course helps students understand the thesis-writing process and covers the basic research methodologies required to begin a thesis project. Each week, we will address one important step in the thesis process, starting with the question, "What is a thesis?", and finishing with the submission of a completed thesis prospectus and annotated bibliography (aka a literature review) of sources relevant to the student's chosen topic. Along the way, we will cover important areas such as choosing a topic, approaching an advisor, scholarly research methods, time management, and thesis presentation requirements. The class is conducted as a collaborative, hands-on workshop and thus provides a strong level of peer-support for students just beginning work on their theses. The goals of the course are to demystify the thesis process, prepare students to write a successful thesis, and provide intellectual and moral support throughout the early thesis-writing process. Department Permission required. Offered Spring only.

### Course Goals

Students will learn to think, read, and write critically using research methods in alignment with their chosen field of study. They will choose a thesis topic relevant to their major and/or scholarly interests, produce an annotated bibliography of scholarly sources related to their topic, produce a well-written and polished thesis proposal, and present their proposal to the class in a peer review exercise. Students will use a variety of sources including books, scholarly articles, class discussions, guest speakers, and their independent research to accomplish the goal of the course: a final, approved thesis proposal.

### Student Learning Outcomes

- Demonstrate ability to narrow proposal topic from general to specific and formulate a strong, arguable thesis.
- Apply oral and written standards of communication appropriate for both academic and professional environments.
- Identify best practices for career preparation and apply them to the development a career portfolio.
- Exhibit professional behavior and values appropriate for a discipline leader in the community.
- Locate, analyze, and properly cite sources (written and/or oral) for use as evidence with a focus

- on demonstrating respect for intellectual property.
- Collaborate effectively with classmates and instructor(s)
- Regulate the pace of work appropriately to meet deadlines.

## Required Texts

There are no required texts for this course. Any readings will be made available online through the course modules at no cost to you. However, you may wish to consult a citation and style guide with which you feel most comfortable. Options include the Chicago Manual of Style, Modern Language Association Handbook, and American Psychological Association Publication Manual. Each manual is available behind the information desk in the John C. Pace Library. Further, the UWF Library website includes short guides for citing the most common types of sources. Check out the [Citation Styles guide](#) for more information. Whichever guide you choose, you must use it consistently throughout the semester.

## Required Materials

- Internet access (broadband is recommended)
- Activated MyUWF email account

## Assignments

### *Thesis Proposal* – (350 points)

1. Topic Identification (25 points): At this stage, students should begin considering which discipline and topics they wish to explore.
  - a. Submit a one paragraph explanation of your chosen topic and describe the desired project format.
  - b. Students present/workshop ideas in class with peers and instructor.
2. Thesis Advisor Identification (25 points): On the Canvas discussion board, post the name and academic department affiliation of your thesis advisor as well as a brief description of your thesis project topic and type.
3. Proposal Rough Draft (50 points): Students will submit a project proposal which explains the goals and structure of the proposed project.
  - a. Background, methods, objectives, and preliminary sources must be included.
4. Annotated Bibliography (100 points): Each student will choose ten sources they have identified, cite the source in their chosen format, and annotate each source clearly and objectively.
5. Presentation & Peer Feedback (50 points): Students will compile an elevator speech-style presentation about their research and share their ideas with the class. Students will also provide critical, constructive feedback to their classmates.
6. Proposal Final Draft (100 points): Students will apply feedback received from the instructor and their classmates to complete a well-written and polished final thesis proposal.

### *Career Components – (50 points)*

Students will identify a specific job or general industry area that they plan to pursue in the future. Students will then participate in a **mock interview** (30 points) using Big Interview in order to learn firsthand how to present oneself to a potential employer. Also, students will complete a brief **career qualifications response** (20 points), identifying what additional qualifications, skills, and/or tools they need to make their goals a reality.

### *Class Engagement – (100 points)*

Students are expected to attend all class meetings and actively participate in all class discussions and activities while always maintaining a professional attitude.

### *Project Development Exercise* (in-class assignment)

This assignment requires students to use an interdisciplinary approach to argue on a relevant problem. The purpose is for students to practice effectively presenting and explaining evidence on two or more sides of an issue. It is essentially doing a research paper, minus the actual paper.

## Communication

You may reach me during designated office hours, by phone, or by email. My goal is to respond to every email within 24 hours Monday through Friday. Weekends are a little different. I will answer emails on Monday morning that were sent after 5 p.m. on Friday, excluding emergency situations which might require a quicker response.

All emails should be written using proper grammar and style rules and include a relevant subject line, salutation, and signature. This may sound a bit overkill, but a university is a professional academic setting; therefore, your emails should be written professionally. Use this rule of thumb: compose emails as if you are writing to a potential employer.

## Grading / Evaluation

IDS 4890 is a workshop/discussion class that includes a combination of class discussions, writing assignments, independent research, and class presentation. The success of the course depends on the active and informed participation of all students. Students are encouraged to ask questions or express concerns about the material and to email, call, or visit the instructor during office hours or by appointment. Your grade depends on your participation and completion of assignments for each class. Be sure to keep track of your grades throughout the semester by accessing Canvas regularly. Check the course schedule, email frequently, and complete assignments on time.

## Late Work Policy

Requests to submit late work should be accompanied by documentation of hospitalization, doctor's appointment, jury duty, military obligation, court appearance, or funeral attendance. Students will also be allowed to turn in a single assignment after the due date (no questions asked). If this occurs, you must notify the instructor within 48 hours of the missed assignment, including holidays and weekends. For every day that it is late, you will lose 10% from the final score. For example, if you turn in an assignment worth 100 points three days late, the most you can earn is 70 points. No additional exceptions will be made.

## Attendance Policy

Attendance in scheduled classes is mandatory. Unexcused absences will negatively impact your grade. It is very important to check your email daily as I often send announcements or reminders. If you have a question, do not hesitate to contact me. In case of emergency or unexpected absence, be sure to contact me *as soon as possible*. Email notice is appropriate, or you may call me at 850.474.2653.

## Grading Scale

S - 300 - 500

U - below 300 points

## Information for students who receive financial aid

To receive financial aid on the normal distribution timeline, attendance must be confirmed within seven calendar days of the course start date. A student may review confirmed attendance status by using the "Classmate" app in MyUWF. A student who stops attending class for any reason will not automatically be withdrawn and will still be responsible for any missed work. A student who stops attending class may be awarded a grade of NF. This grade may affect financial aid eligibility or require repayment of funds awarded.

For financial aid purposes, attendance will be taken the first week of class. Failure to attend the first week of class may result in the disruption of financial aid disbursement by Financial Services.

## Minimum Technical Skills and Special Technology Utilized by Students

UWF prepares students for current and future business and life applications using basic technology. Each UWF student is expected to do the following:

- Activate a MyUWF student account
- Access the MyUWF portal a minimum of 2-3 times a week
- Access UWF email account (Gmail) 2-3 times a week
- Have basic word-processing knowledge

Additional technical skills and technology requirements may vary by college, department, and course. Student use of UWF information technology resources is governed by the Computing Resources Usage Agreement and the Student Communications Policy\* (also see the My Account app in MyUWF). See the [Minimum Technical Skills and Special Technology Utilized by Students](#) page for more information.

## Academic Conduct and Plagiarism

The [Student Code of Conduct](#) (PDF) sets forth the rules, regulations, and expected behavior of students enrolled at the University of West Florida. Violations of any rules, regulations, or behavioral expectations may result in a charge of violating the Student Code of Conduct. It is the student's responsibility to read the Student Code of Conduct and comply with these expectations. The [Academic Misconduct Policy](#) (2017) defines various forms of academic misconduct and describes the procedures an instructor should follow when he or she suspects that a student has violated the Academic Misconduct Policy.

## Student Use of Generative AI Tools in this Course

**The use of generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT, DALL-E, etc.) is not permitted in this class;** therefore, any use of AI tools for work in this class may be considered **academic misconduct** since the work is not yours. Using unauthorized AI tools will result in a failure in the assignment and misconduct report. You may also NOT use any AI generated text as a source in any research or writing assignment.

## Important Information and Updates

Faculty members must sometimes update course elements such as schedules or assignment details in response to student needs and external events (e.g., severe weather or public health emergencies). If updates become necessary as the course progresses, students will be notified through email and an updated syllabus will be posted to Canvas with the date of modification.

Additional information regarding key policies and processes relevant to all courses at UWF can be found on the [Additional Syllabus Statements](#) page.

## Career Development & Community Engagement

Career Development & Community Engagement (CDCE) offers resume reviews, assistance with your job or internship search, interviewing tips, and many other strategies to become career ready. For more information, check out Handshake ([uwf.joinhandshake.com](https://uwf.joinhandshake.com)), visit [uwf.edu/career](https://uwf.edu/career) or call 850-474-2254.

## Schedule

| Class Date  | Topic                                                                 | Assignment                                                                          | Deadline    |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| January 10  | What is a thesis? Review requirements for proposal.                   | Review sample thesis proposals                                                      |             |
| January 17  | Selecting a topic / brainstorm                                        | Topic identification                                                                | January 22  |
| January 24  | Selecting and working with a thesis advisor ( <a href="#">Guide</a> ) | Identify thesis advisor                                                             | February 26 |
| January 31  | Developing your project                                               | Project development exercise                                                        |             |
| February 7  | Writing your proposal                                                 | Proposal rough draft                                                                | March 4     |
| February 14 | IRB Guest Speaker: Natalie Mead                                       | Submitting an IRBNet application                                                    |             |
| February 21 | OUR Guest Speaker: Dr. Allison Schwartz                               | Presenting your research                                                            |             |
| February 28 | Writing an annotated bibliography                                     | Read assigned journal article (more info coming soon)<br><br>Annotated bibliography | April 8     |
| March 6     | CDCE Guest Speaker: Aubrey Shelton                                    | Mock interview<br>Career Qualifications                                             | March 25    |
| March 13    | Revising your proposal                                                | Proposal final draft                                                                | April 22    |
| March 20    | Looking forward: Timeline & requirements                              |                                                                                     |             |
| March 27    | <b>SPRING BREAK</b>                                                   |                                                                                     |             |

|          |                          |                       |        |
|----------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------|
| April 4  | Presentations & feedback | Research presentation | Varies |
| April 11 | Presentations & feedback |                       |        |
| April 18 | Presentations & feedback |                       |        |
| April 25 | Presentations & feedback |                       |        |

## Deadlines

Assignments are due by 5:00 p.m. on the following dates unless otherwise noted:

|             |                                                         |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| January 22  | Topic Identification (post to discussion board)         |
| February 26 | Identify your thesis advisor (post to discussion board) |
| March 4     | Proposal rough draft                                    |
| March 25    | Career qualifications                                   |
| March 25    | Mock interview (recorded in Big Interview)              |
| April 8     | Annotated Bibliography                                  |
| April 22    | Proposal final draft                                    |