2015

CLAS 398 Capstone Thesis Part I

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If you are a student with a disability or special needs and you need special services or assistance, please let me know as soon as possible.

Enrollment in this course constitutes an agreement on your part to read, understand, and follow the procedures and policies as outlined below. Please be advised that this course has an attendance policy and under no circumstances can be taken in absentia.

**Course Description:** This is the first of the two semester capstone thesis experience for students in the Honors A.B. program. The focus of the fall semester is to review basic research skills and create a foundation of resources and knowledge for the student’s original research project. By the end of CLAS 398, the student will complete a detailed outline, annotated bibliography, introduction and one chapter toward the complete thesis. At the end of this capstone thesis experience in the spring students will complete and publically defend an original thesis that:

- relies on a combination of knowledge from the HAB program, university core, and other Xavier courses
- is a synthesis of the analytical skills acquired during your years in the HAB program
- demonstrates outstanding written communication skills
- demonstrates outstanding oral communication in the form of an hour-long defense of your research before peers and other guests (thesis defenses are open to the public)

Course participants present assignments face-to-face in the classroom and through Canvas in written and oral presentations. Cooperative learning is essential to success in this course. Participants are expected to listen carefully and respond helpfully to one another. Participants are also expected to read each other’s written work thoroughly.

**Points** and **Course Assignments for Fall 2015** (Credit given upon completion of Spring semester):

- course participation in all assignments (points will be deducted for lack of participation)
- Signed Director form (10 points)
- XU tutor quizzes (20 points each; 60 points)
- Building Web Resources (50 points)
- Peer Review Building Web Resources (10 points)
- L’Année philologique/Database of Classical Bibliography (DCB) (50 points)
- Peer Review L’Année philologique/DCB (20 points)
- Basic Questions (100 points)

*NB: No partial points given for Peer Review assignments.*
• Peer Review Basic Questions (20 points)
• Oral presentation (50 points)
• Detailed Thesis Chapter Outline with Annotated Bibliography (100 points)
• Peer Review Detailed Thesis Chapter Outline with Annotated Bibliography (20 points)
• Meeting with Director (20 points)
• Signed Reader forms (10 points)
• Thesis Introduction (100 points)
• Peer Review Thesis Introduction (20 points)
• Chapter One (100 points)
• Peer Review Chapter One (20 points)

Course Assignments for Spring 2016:
• First Complete Thesis Draft (100 points: loss of 20 points for each day you are late)
• Peer Review First Complete Thesis Draft (20 points)
• Précis, Presentation, and Mock Defense (100 points)
• NCUR or Miami Conference (50)
• Celebration of Student research (50)
• Final Written Thesis Grade (100 points)
• Oral Defense (no points; assessed by committee as “Distinction,” “High Pass,” “Pass,” “Low Pass,” and “Fail”)
• Capstone Experience Wrap-up (50 points)
• HAB Exit Interview (50 points)

Total Points: 1280

Grading Scale:
A = 1280-1216   A- = 1215-1190   B+ = 1189-1165
B = 1164-1114   B- = 1114-1088   C+ = 1087-1062
C- = 1010-986   D = 985-922   F = 921-0

Students can expect a grade of "C" for meeting the requirements stated in this syllabus. To earn above a “C”, students must demonstrate above average (“B”) or outstanding (“A”) performance.

FALL SEMESTER

Reading (August 25 – December 10)
In addition to the assignments below, you must be continually reading sources to build a knowledge base for your research topic. Your thesis is a product of self-guided research, aided by your director and committee members. In order to focus your topic and ground your research you will need to read widely. Take notes (however detailed or brief as you wish) on the things that you read and keep a large binder/file so that you can find sources again as you need them when you begin writing and revising. I will ask about your reading progress periodically when we meet as a class. Take advantage of the first month of class to read as much as you can.

Thesis Committee and Planning (ASAP – but Due Tuesday, Sept. 29)
Participants must contact three prospective faculty readers/thesis committee members as early in the first semester as possible. One serves as “Director,” and will work with you closely for the first semester; the other two serve as readers and will not see a draft until spring semester. It is still a
good idea to send your readers your revised basic questions assignment (see below), meet with them once during the fall semester, and ask if they have any reading suggestions. This will give them an idea of your project and the opportunity to contribute during the formative stage. The Capstone Course instructor serves as chair of the defense and generally does not serve as a panel member.

Three XU.Tutor quizzes (see Library webpage) (Due Thursday, Aug. 27 by 5:00)
Read through the material on all three XU Tutor quizzes before taking the quizzes. These are:

- XU.Tutor Find
- XU.Tutor Evaluate
- XU.Tutor Use
- http://www.xavier.edu/library/xu-tutor/index.cfm

NOTE: Most of this should be review; however, each year we see issues with finding good sources and errors in proper and sufficient source use. Do not trivialize the process. Be patient and work your way through the review of these research basics.
Be sure to forward your results to me after you take the quiz. You must score an 80% or better on each quiz.

Building Web Material for Class (Due Sunday, Aug. 30 in Canvas assignments by 10:00 pm)
Using Google or a similar search engine, find five website that you believe will be useful links related to writing college research papers/theses; the content should provide information and tips on how to structure a research paper or thesis, how to write with clarity and eschew obfuscation (like that phrase); what it means to avoid nominalization and linking verbs; verb-noun agreement and other common grammatical errors; punctuation of all kind; how to keep good flow; tips on good style.
For each website link write a paragraph that explains its content and why you chose to include it. Post your work in a word document with the links to Canvas by Sunday, Aug. 30 by 10:00 pm.

Discussion Response to Peer Work on Building Web Material (Due Tuesday, Sept. 1 by 3:00 pm) Comment on the quality and efficacy of other students’ postings in Discussions by 3:00 pm. This material serves as our course texts, and Discussion responses are peer review practice.Peer reviews should always include comments on the quality and efficacy of work as well as comments on sense, style, and flow and other proofreading notations that attend to grammar, syntax, and vocabulary use.

L’Année philologique/DCB Keyword and Article Review Assignment (Due Tuesday, Sept. 8 in Canvas by 4:00 pm) and Peer Review (Due Tuesday, Sept. 15 by 3:00 pm).
A separate document of instructions will be in Canvas for this assignment; we will meet on Tuesday, Sept. 1, for a refresher demonstration of L’Année philologique/DCB and Canvas for Peer Review and Discussions. The DCB and Article Review Assignment that you upload to Canvas by Tuesday, Sept. 8 will provide further practice with the peer review feature. Peer reviews should comment on the quality and efficacy of other students’ DCB and Article Review assignments and proofreading notations.

Basic Questions (Due Sunday, Sept. 20 in Canvas assignments by 10:00 pm)
These are brief responses to the following set of basic questions pertaining to your major area of research (theme, issue, topic, etc.), method, bibliography, etc.:
1. Describe briefly your area of research (e.g. Greek medicine from Homer to Lucian; stylistic
anomalies in Latin oratory; relationships between Greek, Roman and Montessori education; Greek systems of taxation and US tax policies).

2. What do you want to demonstrate? (i.e. What is your thesis?) (e.g. "A close examination of Ovid’s Fasti and the Roman Catholic Church’s liturgical calendar shows a strong dependence of the latter on the former.")

3. Briefly describe your method (i.e. How do you plan to make this point? What are your arguments?).

4. List the literatures, primary authors and time periods you will be covering (e.g. Sumerian, post-Alexandrian Greek, Medieval Latin, modern Asian and European). Name as many primary authors and sources as you think you might be treating. Dates for time periods would be helpful.

5. Give a brief rationale for the above (i.e. why these literatures, primary authors and time periods were included and others excluded).

6. List some bibliographical sources (i.e. where will you go to learn (more) about your thesis topic?) References to specific works will be useful; avoid general “encyclopedic” or “dictionary” entries.

These papers should be no longer than 5 typed pages and uploaded to Canvas by 3:00 pm. You will read aloud your thesis and method from this assignment and field questions from the class when we meet on September 22 and 24 at 4:00. The stress here is on thesis and method (i.e. What is the point you want to make, and how are you going to go about making it?) and hearing initial feedback. Written work and presentation will be evaluated for clarity, insightfulness, and time management.

Peer Review of Basic Questions (Due Tuesday, Sept. 22 and 24 – submit hard copy in class)
You can access the Basic Questions assignments of your peers through Canvas. Your comments and suggestions on the content and proofreading notations are due Tuesday, Sept. 22 and 24. We will review half of the class on Tuesday and half on Thursday (order is alphabetical).

Read your classmates’ assignments prior to class and jot down any questions or suggestions that you have for them. This may be alternate wording for the thesis statement, questions about methodology, additional suggestions for primary authors and sources, etc. Please include what you believe will work well, what might need improvement, and what you fear might not work at all.

Oral Presentation (Bring to Class, Tuesday, Sept. 29 and Thursday, Oct. 1)
Revise your thesis idea and present an early description of your final paper. Attention is given to your prospective problem, thesis, method, and resources. You will present this assignment to the class using a 1-page, typed outline of the prospective final paper. The presentation should not exceed 7 minutes. Presentation and outline are evaluated according to clarity, insightfulness, and time management. A separate guide will be provided for this with further instructions.

Detailed Thesis Chapter Outline and Annotated Bibliography (Due in Canvas Tuesday, Oct. 20 by 3:00): By this time you have an idea of your thesis from beginning to end, which you will share in a complete outline of your thesis; all sources for the thesis in the bibliography must be annotated in 3-5 sentences; annotations must capture the gist of the source and how the source is relevant. Do not merely lift annotations from the DCB/L’Année philologique and be sure to explain how each source applies. Chapter outlines should include subsections (if applicable) and be full enough to convey the full sense of the thesis. The bibliography ought to contain a minimum of 10 books and 25-30 articles (make sure web sources are cited correctly).

NB: It is understood that neither the outline nor the bibliography are finished products and both will undergo further changes as work on the thesis continues. You will also need to schedule a
meeting with your director to address the chapter outline and annotated bibliography.

**Peer Review of Detailed Thesis Chapter Outline and Annotated Bibliography (Completed by Tuesday, Oct. 27 by 3:00)**
The review on the above assignment in Canvas asks you to comment on the quality and efficacy of the work your peers are doing and proofread for sense, style, and flow. Please include what you believe will work well, what might need improvement, and what you fear might not work at all.

**Revised Detailed Outline and Thesis Director Meeting Notes (revised outline due via email by Thursday, Oct. 29 at 5:00 pm; notes due via email by Nov. 6 at 5:00 pm)**
Send your thesis director and me a revised copy of your chapter outline and annotated bibliography by Thursday, Oct. 29 at 5:00 pm, and arrange to meet with her/him between Nov. 2 – Nov. 6 to discuss your outline and bibliography. Send me notes for these meetings via email by Nov. 6 at 5:00 – scanned handwritten notes or typed notes are acceptable.

**Thesis Introduction (Due in Canvas Tuesday, Nov. 10 by 10:00 pm)**
This will represent the first draft of a general introduction to your thesis. It will encapsulate what your thesis is about (i.e. present your thesis statement) and set forth a summary of the points you make in the body of your paper to support the thesis and demonstrate its validity.

**Peer Review of Thesis Introduction (Due Tuesday, Nov. 17 by 3:00 pm)**
The review on the above assignment in Canvas asks you to comment on the quality and efficacy of the work your peers are doing and proofread for sense, style, and flow. Please include what you believe will work well, what might need improvement, and what you fear might not work at all. In class on Tuesday, Nov. 17 you will read the beginning of the introduction, including the thesis statement, out loud, and listen to and take notes on feedback from your peers.

**Chapter One (Due in Canvas by Tuesday, Dec. 1 by 10:00 pm)**
This is exactly what it seems: a fully written draft of the first chapter of the thesis you have been working on, thinking about, and receiving feedback on. Be sure the chapter ends with a bibliography for the material covered in it. These will be evaluated according to the substance and clarity of the chapter and completeness of the bibliography. Take comments from the thesis outline and introduction into account.

**Peer Review of Chapter One (Due Tuesday, Dec 8, by 3:00 pm)**
The review on the above assignment in Canvas asks you to comment on the quality and efficacy of the work your peers are doing and proofread for sense, style, and flow. Please include what you believe will work well, what might need improvement, and what you fear might not work at all. Take time to provide meaningful feedback, as this is the beginning of the total thesis draft that will be completed over the break.

**NOTE: First Completed Thesis Draft – Due in Canvas by Jan. 12, 3:00 pm)**
Be sure to send your thesis director a copy and let her/him know that it is available for review. You must meet with your director no later than the week of Jan. 25 for initial feedback and suggestions for revisions. **YOU MUST HAVE APPROVAL FROM YOUR DIRECTOR AND HAVE MADE HIS/HER CORRECTIONS BEFORE PASSING IT ON TO THE REST OF YOUR COMMITTEE.**