2014

CLAS 398 399 Capstone Thesis

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You need an XU account (e-mail account that ends xavier.edu) and access to the Portal and other XU sites like Canvas in order to keep abreast of assignments and manage course information and material. If you do not have daily access to XU websites, you cannot successfully fulfill the requirements this course.

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. At the end of this capstone thesis experience students will develop 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.

Always use full sentences and proper grammar in Discussion Board responses.

**Points** and **Course Assignments for Fall 2014 (Credit given upon completion of Spring semester):**
- course participation in all assignments (points will be deducted for lack of participation)
- XU tutor quizzes (10 points each; 60 points)
- DCB (50 points)
- Peer Review DCB (20 points)
- Building Web Resources (50 points)
- Peer Review Building Web Resources (10 points)
- Basic Questions (100 points)
- Peer Review Basic Questions (20 points)

*NB: No partial points given for Peer Review assignments.*
• Signed Director form (10 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 2015:
• 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

Thesis Committee and Planning (Due Tuesday, Sept. 30)
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. The Capstone Course instructor serves as chair of the defense and generally does not serve as a panel member.

Six XU Tutor quizzes (see Library webpage) (Due Tuesday, Sept. 2 by 3:00)
Read through the material on all six XU Tutor quizzes before taking the quizzes. These are:
• Defining the Question
• Identifying Sources
• Improving a Search
• Evaluation Websites
- Preventing Plagiarism
- Understanding Copyright

Be sure to send the quiz results to me for grades. You must score an 80% or better on each quiz.

**Building Web Material for Class (Due Tuesday, Sept. 16 in Canvas assignments by 3:00 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 Tuesday, Sept. 16, 4:00 pm.

**Discussion Response to Peer Work on Building Web Material (Due Thursday, Sept. 18 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.**

**DCB Keyword and Article Review Assignment (Due Saturday, Sept. 13 in Canvas by 5:00 pm) and Peer Review (Due Tuesday, Sept. 16 by 3:00 pm).**

A separate document of instructions will be in Canvas for this assignment; we will meet in the Library on Tuesday, Sept. 9, for a demonstration of the DCB and Canvas. The DCB and Article Review Assignment that you upload to Canvas by Saturday will provide further practice with the peer review feature, which we will discuss on Tuesday, Sept. 16 in class. Peer reviews should comment on the quality and efficacy of other students’ DCB and Article Review assignments and proofreading notations.

**Basic Questions (Due Tuesday, Sept. 23 in Canvas assignments by 3:00 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 present select points from this assignment and field questions from the class when we meet at 4:00. The stress here is on **thesis** (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. 30 by 3:00 pm)**
You will review the Basic Questions assignments of your peers through Canvas. Your comments and suggestions on the content and proofreading notations are due Tuesday, Sept. 30 by 3:00. 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, Oct. 14)**
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 10 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. 28 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, Nov. 4 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.

**Thesis Director Meeting (meetings TBA; notes due to Canvas by 12:00 noon, Nov. 18)**
Send your thesis director and me a revised copy of this assignment no later than Thursday, Nov. 6, and arrange to meet with her/him the week of Nov. 10 or Nov. 17 at the latest to discuss your outline and bibliography. Send me notes for these meetings by Nov. 18 at 12:00 (noon).
Thesis Introduction (Due in Canvas Tuesday, Nov. 18 by 3:00 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. You will read the introduction out loud in class for feedback.

Peer Review of Thesis Introduction (Due Tuesday, Nov. 25 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.

Chapter One (Due in Canvas by Tuesday, Dec. 2 by 3:00 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 9, by 6:00 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.

SECOND SEMESTER

First Completed Thesis Draft (Due in Canvas by Jan. 13, 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. 26 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.**

Peer Review of Chapter One (Due Tuesday, Jan. 27 by 3:00 pm)
The review on the above assignment in Canvas asks you to comment on the quality and efficacy of the first thesis draft that your peers submitted Jan. 13. 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, esp. proofreading comments on sense, style, and flow, as this is the first and only time you will read entire drafts to provide feedback.

Précis Presentation and Mock Defense (Tuesday, Feb. 17 and 19): All of you will orally present a 75-125 word typed précis of your second thesis draft, which should be close to the final product, along with a summary. Précis and presentation should last about 10 minutes; mock defense will last up to 15 minutes. Précis and presentation are evaluated according to clarity and conciseness and provide an opportunity to think about the opening address for the final defense; consider this a summary for those at the defense who will be hearing about your thesis topic for the first time. The Mock defense is evaluated based on general knowledge related to the thesis as well as specific
claims/data etc. contained therein. Please bring copies of the précis for everyone in the class. A revised version of the précis is attached to the final thesis draft.

A good précis:
1. accurately states the paper's problem, thesis, method, and primary resources in 75-125 words
2. avoids technical terms (space is not available in a précis to define terms—that is work done in the body of the paper.
3. uses active voice and present tense

Completed Final Thesis Draft due in Canvas no later than 5:00 pm on Friday, March 6.

Presentation at NCUR or Miami Classical Conference (dates TBA): Students are required to submit abstracts and present either at the National Conferences of Undergraduate Research (NCUR) or the Miami, Ohio Classical Conference. NCUR will take place at in Lexington, KY. Dates for NCUR and the Miami Classical Conference will be announced when available.

Presentation at Celebration of Student Research (date TBA): Students are required to submit abstracts and present at the Xavier Celebration of Student Research. Dates will be announced when available.

Thesis Defense March 10-April 4
Your thesis defense will be scheduled when your director, readers, and HAB director are able to meet; these will begin the week of March 9 and end Friday, April 3. To the best of our ability, defenses will be scheduled during class time, and your attendance (and support) is required. **NB: You are finished writing no later than March 6 regardless of whether you defend early or late within this period.**

The hour-long defense proceeds with a brief introduction by the Capstone Course instructor, a 10-minute opening statement by the presenter, a 30-minute period for committee questions, and a 15-minute period for questions from the floor. The thesis and presentation are evaluated according to clarity, response to questions, and time management.

It is not unusual for students to be asked by their director or committee members to revise the thesis according to new ideas/findings that arise during the defense. Final revised copies are due in Canvas by Thursday, April 23.

Capstone Experience Wrap-up and Assessment (Tuesday, April 14)
We will meet to discuss your thoughts on the capstone experience process, what went well, what could have gone better. You will at this time sign the waiver that allows your thesis to be uploaded to the library archives, though you may continue making revisions until April 23.

HAB Senior Exit Interviews (Tuesday, April 21)
Seniors meet to discuss their experience in the HAB program, other majors and minors, the university core, and plans after graduation. An evaluation form will be sent to you for anonymous submission to Darleen Frickman before this day, which HAB faculty will not see until after graduation. This meeting is an opportunity for everyone to share openly her/his thoughts with HAB faculty.