2014

398 399 Thesis Review

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Thesis Review

The primary aim of these courses is to prepare seniors majoring in Philosophy or enrolled in the Philosophy, Politics and the Public program to write their senior thesis projects. We will work together on the process of deciding on a thesis topic, developing strategies for research, formulating a thesis and argument, and writing the thesis itself.

In the fall semester, students will decide on a thesis topic, begin to work with a thesis advisor on research, produce an annotated bibliography containing relevant sources, submit a formal proposal and draft a section of the thesis. We will meet weekly, and considerable class time will be set aside for work on these elements and peer reviews of each others’ work.

In the spring semester, we will meet much less frequently. Students will work primarily with an advisor in completing the writing and revision of the thesis, and then they will present and defend that thesis orally.


Grading:

PHIL 398 (1 credit) PHIL 399 (2 credits)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All students:</th>
<th>Philosophy majors:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annotated bibliography</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Proposal</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section Draft</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seminar Participation</td>
<td>25%</td>
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PHIL 398

Your grade for this class will be based on the quality of your performance in the thesis course: the written work you submit and your general engagement in the course (both during class and in your general dedication to the thesis project). Assignments will be graded satisfactory (2), unsatisfactory (1) or late or incomplete submission (0).

Annotated bibliography: This document should contain bibliographic information and annotations for at least ten relevant secondary sources. For each relevant source, you will state:

- its primary thesis,
- a brief sketch of its argument,
- a brief statement of its relevance to your project.

Research proposal: This document will contain a clear statement of your project’s thesis, a brief outline of its argument, and a review of the relevant secondary research on which you will draw. It should be about 6-8 pages long and will require the signature of your thesis advisor. You will
turn in TWO versions of this proposal: one to your advisor and one on Canvas, two weeks later, that includes reflections on your advisor’s response.

Section draft: You will be required to submit a draft of a portion of your thesis (8-10 pages). You will have an opportunity in class to discuss this draft in one-on-one meetings with your classmates, and with the group at large.

Participation: In addition to your written work, students are expected to attend class, contribute to discussions and engage in group work. This will include occasionally bringing work to class for peer review or group discussion. Beginning Sep. 16, you will also submit a weekly progress report. Bring to class a short, type-written summary of what you accomplished that week on your project and what you need to do next. Out of the 12 weeks for which reports will be due, submission of 10 or more reports will be satisfactory, 8-9 will be unsatisfactory, fewer than 8 will be incomplete.

PHIL 399, Philosophy majors:
Thesis: This portion of your grade includes both the written thesis itself and an oral defense. The written thesis is usually given about twice as much weight as the oral defense. Both grades are determined by the members of your thesis committee.

Written thesis: Your final written thesis should be between 20-40 pages long. You will write it primarily in consultation with your thesis advisor. You will also be required to find two additional readers for your thesis. The written thesis must consider a specific philosophical topic in light of relevant primary and secondary research.
- A completed draft of your thesis must be submitted to your advisor no later than Friday, Jan. 30.
- Your final draft is due to your committee no later than one week before your scheduled defense.

Oral defense: Late in the spring semester, we will schedule an oral defense for your thesis project. You will present a brief, 5-10 minute account of the primary argument and significance of your thesis. Following your summary account, your advisor and readers will have about 45 mintues to ask questions of you. Defenses will probably be scheduled during the week of April 27- May 1 (I will have more concrete information for you early in the Spring semester.)

Comprehensive Exams: The written comprehensive examination is usually held on the Friday of finals week or the Monday of the following week. It covers Ethics, Theory of Knowledge, Metaphysics, and three history of philosophy courses of your choice. On exam day, you are given a choice between two questions for each course, and are expected to write about a page for each course.

PHIL 399, PPP Majors:
Written Thesis: Your final written thesis should be between 25-40 pages long. You will write it primarily in consultation with your thesis advisor. Your written thesis will concern a topic of your choosing from any relevant discipline, though it must also contain some significant philosophical content. You will be expected to conduct research into primary and secondary sources.
- A completed draft of your thesis must be submitted to your advisor no later than Friday, Jan. 30.
• Your final draft is due to your advisor no later than one week before your oral presentation.

**Oral Defense:** On the day of the “Celebration of Undergraduate Student Research,” you will be required to give a brief, 10 minute presentation of your thesis’ argument and significance. Any members of the public who attend your defense will have about 15 minutes to ask questions about it. Your advisor will award a grade based on the quality of your presentation and your responses. I will inform you of the date of this year’s Celebration once it is scheduled.
CLASS POLICIES

Attendance: While you are expected to keep up with your research and writing at home, much of the work of the course takes place in the classroom, which means it is important that you are in class.

- Students will be permitted 1 absence per semester.
- **If you miss class 2-4 times:** For each absence, you will lose 0.5 points (on a 100 point scale) from your final grade.
- **If you miss class 5-8 times:** For each absence after the first four, you will lose a grade from your final grade in the course (e.g. from a B to a B-).
- The penalty applies **regardless of whether your absence is excused.**
- Missing part of class (by being late, leaving early, or leaving for a few minutes in the middle of class) will also affect your grade. **For every three times you miss part of class,** you will lose 0.5 points from your final grade.
- In the event of extreme illness, you must make arrangements with me to complete the minimum requirements for the course. While I am willing to work with you to make it possible for you to complete the course, if you must miss a significant portion of the semester, completing the course may not be possible.

Late/missed work:

- Written work must be submitted by the time and day indicated. Work submitted directly to me should be submitted through the Assignments on Canvas. Work submitted to your advisor should be submitted in whatever format your advisor specifies.
- Weekly progress reports are due at the beginning of class and will not be accepted late. Please bring a typed hard copy of your report to class.
- Technical problems are not an adequate excuse for submitting work late. Submit your work early enough that you have time to address any technical problems that come up.
- Since most of your work will be submitted electronically, it is your responsibility to ensure that it has been submitted correctly. You will receive a receipt from Turnitin.com for anything submitted there.

Plagiarism: You will be expected to follow the policy for academic honesty as outlined in the Xavier University Catalog. Violation of this policy will result, at minimum, in an F on the assignment. A second violation of this policy will automatically result in an F for the course.

- All papers will be submitted to turnitin.com, a service that checks papers against those on the web and in its database. If you have any questions or concerns, please see me.
- Working with other students does not constitute plagiarism, but copying another student’s work does. If you work with your classmates or with other students who have taken my class in the past, be sure anything you turn in is written in your own words.
- Consulting a website such as Sparknotes does not constitute plagiarism. Cutting and pasting from a website, however, is plagiarism, even if you rephrase occasional passages. Any time you use someone else’s words, you must provide an adequate citation.
Course Schedule

The following is a preliminary schedule of the topics we will cover. For most of the semester, we will only meet once a week. Please try to keep this time period free on both Tuesdays and Thursdays, in case something comes up that will require us to meet twice in a particular week.

Week 1: Aug. 26  Course requirements, syllabus

Week 2: Sep. 2  Choosing a topic, stating your topic  Read: Turabian, p. 3-23

Week 3: Sep. 9  Locating sources (Librarian visits)  Read: Turabian, p. 24-36

Week 4: Sep. 16  Locating sources (Librarian visits)  Annotated bibliography

Week 5: Sep. 23  Effective reading, working with sources  Read: Turabian, p. 37-48

Week 6: Sep. 30  The elements of argument  Read: Turabian, p. 49-62

*Due, beginning of class: Annotated Bibliography*

Week 7: Oct. 7  Building an argument  Read: Turabian, p. 63-72

Week 8: Oct. 14  Beginning to write  Read: Turabian, p. 73-83

*Due, by midnight: Research proposal to advisor*

Week 9: Oct. 21  Elements of your thesis

Week 10: Oct. 28  Responding to suggestions and revision  Read: Turabian, p. 100-123

*Due, beginning of class: Research proposal and reflection*

Week 11: Nov. 4  Draft of a section discussion and revision

Week 12: Nov. 11  Draft of a section discussion and revision  *Due, beginning of class: Section draft*

Week 13: Nov. 18  Draft of a section discussion and revision

Week 14: Nov. 25  Draft of a section discussion and revision

Week 15: Dec 2  Looking ahead  Read: Turabian, p. 124-132

Week 16: Dec. 9  Conferences as necessary