

**Communication 495-303 – COMPS Capstone Thesis
and
Communication 499-303 – Senior Honors Thesis**

Dr. Jessica Taylor Piotrowski

jtaylor@asc.upenn.edu

Annenberg School for Communication, Office 232

Office Phone: 215.898.4996

Office Hours: Thursdays, 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM and by appointment

Thursdays, 10:30 AM – 11:30 AM

Annenberg School for Communication, Room 225

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Each student enrolled in this course is completing either a senior honors thesis or COMPS capstone thesis. This is a required course for any student completing a capstone or senior honors thesis. This course is designed to help ensure that you complete your thesis research in a timely manner as well as offer you adequate opportunities to address issues or questions that you may have. In addition to the assigned course time, you will be expected to meet individually with your professor throughout semester to discuss your research in more detail. Course meeting time and individual meetings will provide you ample time to discuss your research progress and solicit feedback from both the professor and your peers in the course. Course assignments will directly contribute to the successful completion of your thesis.

COURSE MATERIALS

Required Books (available in Penn Bookstore)

- Ridley, D. (2008). *The Literature Review: A Step-By-Step Guide for Students*. New York, NY: Sage.

Recommended Books (available in Penn Bookstore or in both ASC and Van Pelt Libraries)

- American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th Ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- University of Chicago. (2011). *Chicago Manual of Style: The Essential Guide for Writers, Editors, and Publishers*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

You are required to use one format for your citations and references throughout your thesis. I recommend obtaining and using the manual for the manuscript format you choose to use.

Additional Readings

- Additional course readings will be made available on the course's Blackboard page (<https://courseweb.library.upenn.edu>). Because of the nature of the course, few readings have been assigned. However, it is expected that you are consulting those sources necessary for your thesis research throughout the semester.

COURSE POLICIES AND OTHER INFORMATION

Attendance

Attendance is required for this course. A portion of your grade is based on regular attendance and class participation. If you anticipate missing a lecture in its entirety or leaving a lecture early, please inform me ahead of time and arrange to speak with a fellow classmate about the material that you missed.

Readings and Assignments

- You are responsible for completing all reading and assignments prior to the class for which it is assigned. All assignments and due dates will be posted on the class blackboard site. The attached course calendar indicates an approximate timeline for each assignment, but the exact due dates may change as per our progress. Any changes will be announced in class and on blackboard.
- Assignments are due electronically, and should be .doc or .docx format. The document name should include your last name and the assignment number (e.g., piotrowski_assign1.doc). Be sure to make/keep a copy of anything that you submit.
- Late Assignments. If you are unable to meet a specified deadline, you should speak with me **in advance** to determine if an extension can be granted. If you turn in an assignment past the deadline, without an approved extension, your assignment grade will be docked points.

Advisor Communication

Each student completing a capstone or senior honors thesis has a faculty advisor. I will communicate with your faculty advisor during the semester to discuss your thesis progress. Your faculty advisor knows that you are enrolled in this course and is aware of the expectations of this course. It is your responsibility to (1) provide a copy of this syllabus to your faculty advisor to ensure that he/she is aware of the assigned due dates in the course, (2) meet with your faculty advisor regularly to discuss your thesis progress, and (3) provide copies of your written work to your faculty advisor for review throughout the semester.

Technology in the Classroom

Cell phones are a distraction both for me as well as for other students in the class. Please silence your cell phone and refrain from texting during class.

Like cell phones, laptops are frequently a distraction for students. However, some students are able to use their laptop efficiently for class note-taking. As such, you are permitted to bring your laptop to class providing that you are using it for note-taking or another acceptable classroom use. Please refrain from emailing, social networking, instant messaging, surfing the Internet, playing games, writing papers, doing homework, etc. during class time. Inappropriate uses will be noted and will impact your class participation grade.

Electronic Communication

This course has an accompanying Blackboard website (<https://courseweb.library.upenn.edu>). Please check this website frequently as all announcements, assignments, lectures, and additional readings will be posted.

In addition to posting all course information on the class website, my primary means of getting in touch with outside of regular class hours is email. It is important that you check your Penn email account regularly. If you do not use your Penn email address as your primary email account, please arrange to have Penn email forwarded to your preferred account. I respond to most email messages within 24 hours Monday- Friday. If there is an urgent situation that requires my immediate attention, please include the word "URGENT" in your subject line.

Influenza Prevention and Preparedness

In accordance with guidelines from the University, if you experience flu-like symptoms, do not attend class until you are fever free for more than 24 hours. Please send an email or leave a phone message regarding your absence and we will work together for you to make up any assignments and class material. More instructions on what to do if you are feeling ill can be found here: <http://www.upenn.edu/pennnews/flu/#students>.

Academic Honesty

The University of Pennsylvania Academic Code of Integrity states: Any work that a student undertakes as part of progress toward a degree or certification must be the student's own, unless the relevant instructor specifies otherwise. Plagiarism, use or performance of another person's work, misconduct during an examination, prior possession of an examination, and submission of work previously used are violations of the Code. Any student who violates this code will receive zero points for the work in question and will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for further action. If you are not sure what constitutes plagiarism, please consult the Office of Student Conduct's web site and its various relevant links at www.upenn.edu/osc.

As noted on the thesis proposal form that you signed prior to enrollment in the thesis course, your thesis must be original work that was not completed in a previous course and will not be completed to meet requirements of another current course. If your thesis builds on work previously submitted for another course, please see me to discuss ways of ensuring that your thesis meets this requirement.

COURSE GRADING

Your course grade will be based on your performance in three core areas: class participation, successful completion of weekly assignments, and your final thesis. Your final course grade will be assigned by your faculty advisor. The grade you receive from your course recitation will be provided to your faculty advisor. Your faculty advisor will factor in your recitation performance when determining your final course grade. In most cases, your course recitation grade will be the same as your final course grade. Below is a brief description of each along with its percentage allocation. More information about each assignment will be provided in class.

Class Participation **10%**

To receive full credit for this portion of your grade, students are expected to attend class, actively contribute to the class discussions, and complete class readings on time.

Weekly Assignments **40%**

For most weeks, you are assigned to complete some portion of your thesis research. All assignments are designed to help you successfully complete your thesis. Completing these assignments on time is critical. If you cannot complete a specific assignment by a set deadline, consult with your professor. You will receive feedback on all assignments. Additionally, all assignments will be discussed in class. Grading for these assignments will be on a simple grading scheme of:

- 0 = (0%), no work submitted
- ✓-- = (80%), work below expectations
- ✓- = (85%), work somewhat below expectations
- ✓ = (90%), work meets expectations
- ✓+ = (95%), work exceeds expectations

Final Thesis **50%**

Final version of your thesis. **Must be submitted by April 29, 2010.**

Course Schedule / Information

Week	Date	Topic	Readings Due	Assignments
Week 1	January 13	Introduction Syllabus Review	None	Assign. 1, Introduce
Week 2	<i>January 19</i>	<i>Assignment 1 (Proposal Highlights) due by 9 AM on Blackboard</i>		
	January 20	Thesis Expectations	Bem, 2003 Merrigan & Huston, 2009, pgs 12-18	Assign. 1, Review Assign. 2, Introduce
Week 3	<i>January 26</i>	<i>No Assignments Due, begin locating references for literature review</i>		
	January 27	Literature Review: Part 1	Ridley, 2008 Chapter 1 & 2	
Week 4	<i>February 2</i>	<i>Assignment 2 (Annotated Bibliography) due by 9 AM on Blackboard</i>		
	February 3	Methodology Section	Pyrzczak & Bruce, 2007, Chapter 9 Hon, 1997 Jordan, 2004 Jordan, 2005	Assign. 3, Introduce
Week 5	<i>February 9</i>	<i>Assignment 3 (Methodology Section, Draft) due by 9 AM on Blackboard</i>		
	February 10	<u>No Class</u> Individual Student Meetings to Review Assignment 2 & 3		
Week 6	<i>February 16</i>	<i>No Assignments Due</i>		
	February 17	Literature Review: Part 2	Ridley, 2008 Chapter 6	Assign. 4, Introduce Assign. 5, Introduce
Week 7	<i>February 23</i>	<i>Assignment 4 (Literature Review Outline) due by 9 AM on Blackboard</i>		
	February 24	Literature Review & Method Sections	None	Assign. 4, Review

Week	Date	Topic	Readings Due	Assignments
Week 8	March 2	<i>Assignment 5 (Literature Review & Methodology, Draft) due by 9 AM on Blackboard</i>		
	March 3	Results Section	Pyrzczak & Bruce, 2007, Chapter 11 Hon, 1997 Jordan, 2004 Jordan, 2005	Assign. 6, Introduce
Week 9	March 9	<i>No Assignments Due</i>		
	March 10	Spring Break, No Class		
Week 10	March 16	<i>No Assignments Due, work on Assignment 6</i>		
	March 17	<u>No Class</u> Individual Student Meetings to Review Assignment 5		
Week 11	March 23	<i>No Assignments Due, work on Assignment 6</i>		
	March 24	Discussion Section Presentation Expectations	Ridley, 2008 Chapter 10 Hon, 1997 Jordan, 2004 Jordan, 2005	Assign. 7, Introduce Assign. 8, Introduce Assign. 9, Introduce
Week 12	March 30	<i>Assignment 6 (Results Section, Draft) due by 9 AM on Blackboard</i>		
	March 31	Class Cancelled		
Week 13	April 6	<i>Assignment 7 (Discussion Section, Draft) due by 9 AM on Blackboard</i>		
	April 7	<u>No Class</u> Individual Student Meetings		
Week 14	April 13	<i>None Due, Work on Final Thesis Draft (Assignment 8) & Presentation (Assignment 9)</i>		
	April 14	Student Presentations		
	April 15	Assignment 8: "Final Thesis, Draft" due by 5 PM. <i>Submit to course professor via Blackboard Submit to Faculty Thesis Advisor via Mailboxes</i>		

Week	Date	Topic	Readings Due	Assignments
Week 15	April 20	<i>None Due, Work on Presentation</i>		
	April 21	Student Presentations		
	April 22	<i>Students will receive feedback on thesis draft (Assignment 8) electronically.</i>		
Week 16	April 29	<p>FINAL THESIS DUE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Must be submitted by 5 PM - Submit electronically via Blackboard <p><u>AND</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Submit THREE HARD COPIES of final thesis. One copy to course professor, one copy to faculty advisor, and one copy to Alison Berstecher. 		

Thesis Calendar, Spring 2011

Communication 495-303 and Communication 499-303

Assignment #	Description	Deadline (Due at 9 AM unless otherwise specified)
Assignment 1	Proposal Highlights	January 19 th
Assignment 2	Annotated Bibliography	February 2 nd
Assignment 3	Methodology Section, Draft	February 9 th
Assignment 4	Literature Review Outline	February 23 rd
Assignment 5	Literature Review & Methodology, Draft	March 2 nd
Assignment 6	Results Section, Draft	March 30 th
Assignment 7	Discussion Section, Draft	April 6 th
Assignment 8	Thesis, Draft	April 15th, by 5 PM
Assignment 9	Student Presentations	April 14 th & 21 st
FINAL THESIS DUE		April 29th, by 5 PM

Recommended Sources to Consult

Becker, H. S. (2007). *Writing for the Social Scientists: How to start and finish your thesis, book, or article* (2nd ed.). Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Bloomberg, L.D., & Volpe, M. (2008). *Completing your qualitative dissertation: A roadmap from beginning to end*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Booth, W.C., Colomb, G.G., & Williams, J. M. (2008). *The Craft of Research* (3rd Ed.). Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Lipson, C. (2005). *How to write a BA thesis: A practical guide from your first ideas to your finished paper*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.