

University of Calgary
Department of Communication and Culture

Communication & Culture (CMCL) 590A - Honours Thesis: Directed Research
Seminar 01 - Fall 2014 – Winter 2015
September 8, 2014 – April 15, 2015

Thursdays 12:30– 15:15

Instructor: Dr. Tania S. Smith
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Office Hours: WF 13:00-14:00, or by appointment, telephone or Skype (smit.ucalgary).

Course Description

Supervised individual research and preparation of thesis. The honours seminar is required for and limited to senior students in the Honours program in the Department of Communication and Culture. Prerequisite: Consent of the Department (admission to honours program).

Additional information

CMCL 590 (Honours Thesis) replaces two optional half courses in your final year. CMCL 590 consists of an eight month independent research project under the supervision of a faculty member. At the end of this project you will submit a written thesis of about 40 pages and be given an oral exam in your area of research by a committee of three faculty members.

The thesis supervisor provides primary guidance for thesis research and writing. The seminar provides peer-supported learning and program coordinator guidance throughout the process.

The seminar will not meet every week, and may end early some weeks. However, students are expected to be available during the weekly Honours seminar time; to present on Honours day, April 30, after Winter term ends; and to meet the deadlines of the Honours program. The tentative schedule of meetings is below. Any major changes will be communicated through Desire2Learn with at least 1 week advance notice.

Objectives of the Course

- To learn about diverse research methods, thesis writing processes, and thesis structures and styles
- To review other theses and research projects as samples for discussion and critique
- To present progress reports on one's thesis progress
- To discuss ongoing thesis learning strategies, and to learn from one another
- To celebrate the success of one's completed thesis

Internet and electronic communication device information

During student check-ins and presentations, electronic devices must be put away and laptop screens must be closed. At other times, students should use electronic devices for course-related functions only. Show professional

courtesy and attentiveness to the instructor and fellow students by using technology silently and discreetly, minimizing visual distraction to your peers.

Required Textbooks and Readings

- There is no required textbook.
- All Honours students are expected to be familiar with the guidelines:
 - <http://comcul.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate/honours-program>
 - <http://comcul.ucalgary.ca/honoursthesis>
- Recommended readings and handouts will be provided on Desire2Learn.

Assignments and Evaluation

There are no formal graded assignments for this course. Your thesis itself, graded by your supervisor, is the only formal assignment.

However, as a student in the Honours program you are expected to be prepared for the class activities listed on the schedule of activities (below), and to give presentations when scheduled.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

Assignment submission

Presentation slides should be saved to .ppt or .pptx and brought to class on a memory stick as a backup. Bringing a PDF file is highly recommended in case your PowerPoint file is not compatible with the version on the classroom computer (TIP: you can convert files to PDF online at <http://www.freepdfconvert.com/>). As much as possible, ensure that all media you rely on is available even without an internet connection, and make backup plans (i.e. verbal summaries and descriptions of videos or audio) in case the technology does not work as desired.

File format requirements: Submit files in .doc, .docx, .ppt, .pptx, or pdf file format. Use the following file name formats, with hyphens (-) instead of spaces:

- 590-ThesisPres01-LastnameFirstname.docx

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

This course is conducted in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP). As one consequence, **students should identify themselves on all written work by placing their name on the front page. However, do not put your ID number on group assignments or work to be reviewed by peers.** For more information see also <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>

Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability who may require academic accommodation, it is your responsibility to register with the Student Accessibility Services (220-8237, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/>) and discuss your needs with your instructor no later than 14 days after the start of the course.

Writing Skills Statement

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, although to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. For details see <http://comcul.ucalgary.ca/needtoknow>

Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc) but also general clarity and organization. Research papers must be properly documented.

If you need help with your writing, you may use the Writing Centre: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

Grading System

The following grading system is used in the Department of Communication and Culture:

Letter	Percent	Grade point	U of C Calendar description
A+	96-100	4.0	Outstanding
A	90-95.99	4.0	Excellent--superior performance, showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.
A -	85-89.99	3.7	
B+	80-84.99	3.3	
B	75-79.99	3.0	Good--clearly above average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.
B-	70-74.99	2.7	
C+	65-69.99	2.3	
C	60-64.99	2.0	Satisfactory--basic understanding of the subject matter.
C-	55-59.99	1.7	
D+	53-54.99	1.3	
D	50-52.99	1.0	Minimal pass--marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject.
F	0-49	0	Fail--unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.

Your grade in COMS 590 will be your thesis grade, assessed by your supervisor in consultation with committee members after your oral exam.

A degree “with honours” requires that students maintain a minimum GPA of 3.30 in the final 15 FCE and all courses in the Major Field, including CMCL 590. A degree with “first-class honours” requires a GPA of 3.60. Please see the calendar for full regulations for [Honours Degrees with a Major Field](#) in the Faculty of Arts. See also specific course requirements for honours in [COMS](#) and [FILM](#).

Plagiarism and Source Citation

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possibly suspension or expulsion from the university. You must document not only direct quotations but also paraphrases and ideas where they appear in your text. A reference list at the end is insufficient by itself. Readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people’s words and ideas begin. This includes assignments submitted in non-traditional formats such as web pages or visual media, and material taken from such sources.

Please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (3rd Floor Taylor Family Digital Library, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>) if you have any questions regarding how to document sources.

Academic Misconduct

For information on academic misconduct and the consequences thereof please see the current University of Calgary Calendar at the following link: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

Research Ethics

Whenever you perform research with human participants (i.e. surveys, interviews, observation) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve of your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, see <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/research/research-ethics>

Important information, services, and contacts for students

For information about . . .	Visit or contact . . .
ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (PIC)	SS 102 403-220-3580 picarts@ucalgary.ca
CAMPUS SECURITY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calgary Police Service • Emergency Text Messaging • Emergency Evacuation & Assembly • Safewalk Program 	http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/ 403-220-5333 403-266-1234 Emergency: call 911 http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints If you feel uncomfortable walking alone at any time, call Campus Security for an escort (220-5333). For more information, see http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/
DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT help line 	http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students 403-220-5555 or itsupport@ucalgary.ca
STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Support Services • Student Services Mobile App 	http://ucalgary.ca/ssc http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents
STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty of Arts Reps • Student Ombudsman 	http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/governance/elections/home.html http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds
SU WELLNESS CENTRE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling Services • Health Services • Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE • Online resources and tips 	403-210-9355 (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health 403-266-HELP (4357) http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus If you're concerned about a friend or your own well-being, it is important to seek help early. Call or visit the SU Wellness Centre or the 24-hour crisis line.

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

Please refer to the calendar on Desire2Learn for the official, updated schedule.

EVERY CLASS: Every meeting will begin with a “round table” on research progress – please come prepared to update your classmates on the status of your research and writing.

September 11: Meet the Honours cohort; discuss everyone’s research topic; outline the seminar expectations; discuss the Honours thesis deadlines; discuss the Ethics application process; discuss scheduling of meetings with supervisor.

September 18: Discuss formal proposal criteria for full honors proposal (due Wednesday, October 01). Discuss possible thesis formats. Select past honours theses to read for October 09.

September 25: Discuss the styles and formats of past theses; discuss various theoretical frameworks and methodologies for thesis research.

October 02: NO CLASS – your full honours proposal is due to the honours coordinator; cc. to your supervisor.

October 09: Meet with former Honours students to talk about typical struggles and strategies for success.

October 16: First round of peer review (a section of your thesis or proposal). Discuss introductions and conclusions.

October 30: Progress reports and plans for coming few weeks. Discuss methods of data analysis.

November 06: NO CLASS – make progress on your thesis.

November 13: NO CLASS – make progress on your thesis.

November 20: Progress reports to cohort. Discuss argumentation strategies and logical structure in thesis writing.

November 27: NO CLASS – make progress on your thesis.

December 04: Second round of peer review (a new section of your thesis). Discuss expectations for winter semester. Discuss strategy for coming month.

January 08: NO CLASS – make progress on your thesis.

January 15: Detailed progress reports to cohort. (Also, your Interim Progress Report from you and your supervisor is due today to the Honours Coordinator.) Sign up for upcoming presentations. Discuss presentation format and respondent responsibilities.

January 22: NO CLASS – Prepare your presentation as scheduled in the coming weeks

January 29: First round of presentations (those who are not presenting will prepare questions and provide feedback).

February 05: NO CLASS – make progress on your thesis.

February 12: Final round of presentations (those who are not presenting will prepare questions and provide feedback).

February 19: NO CLASS – make progress on your thesis.

February 26: Discuss final push of writing; peer review (a new section of your thesis). Discuss formatting of citation and references, with an emphasis on APA style.

March 05: NO CLASS – make progress on your thesis.

March 12: First half of class: check-in (all). Discuss oral exam. Discuss sentence correctness and the editing process.

March 19: NO CLASS – make progress on your thesis.

March 26: plan for Honours Day presentations. Discuss poster purpose, content & formatting.

April 02: NO CLASS – make progress on your thesis. (Today is the day before Good Friday)

April 09: Final check in. Peer review of poster drafts.

April 16-23: Submit poster files for printing prior to Honours Day.

April 30: Honours Day. This event occurs on a Thursday two weeks after Winter term ends. Students will display posters of their thesis research and be available to discuss them with guests (your supervisors and other faculty members will be invited).

Schedule of 2014-2015 Honours Thesis Deadlines

These deadlines apply to the Honours Thesis and are required by the Honours Program. Any deviations from these deadlines should be discussed with your supervisor and the honours coordinator.

Regular meetings with your supervisor: As you spend the Fall and Winter researching and writing your thesis, you and your supervisor are expected to meet regularly, approximately every two weeks, to discuss ideas, concepts, data, and drafts.

September 25: Any thesis research involving human participants (i.e. surveys, interviews, observation), requires research ethics approval from the Faculty of Arts before beginning to recruit participants. If your thesis requires research ethics approval, complete the TCPS 2 Tutorial Course on Research Ethics (CORE), prior to the submission of your ethics application. Go to this [link](#) to complete the tutorial. The electronic certificate, which the student receives upon completion of the tutorial, must be submitted along with the ethics application form(s) – due on October 09.

October 02: Final proposal and working bibliography submitted to Honours Coordinator. Thesis supervisors approach prospective oral exam committee members in advance of the Form 2 deadline on October 16.

October 09: Ethics application, if required, must be submitted to the Faculty of Arts. Please click [here](#) to download the undergraduate student ethics application form. The application should be submitted both in hard copy to the Associate Dean (Research) in SS 1352 and by email to Andrea Derksen at ajderkse@ucalgary.ca, with the student's supervisor and honours coordinator cc'd on the email. Please keep in mind that the ethics turnaround, including revisions, often takes 3-4 weeks, so you are highly encouraged to submit ethics applications well in advance of this deadline.

October 16: Names of committee members for thesis oral exams submitted to Administrative Assistant, Kristine Ennis. ([Form 2](#)) The oral exam will involve your supervisor and two other members of Communication and Culture or other faculties chosen by mutual agreement between you and your supervisor.

December 11-January 08: Your supervisor must have a provisional first draft of the entire thesis, with significant content in each chapter or section. The exact date of your first draft is negotiable with your supervisor. This will only be a draft – be prepared for significant rewriting after this point. Without a first draft at this point, you significantly jeopardize the likelihood of adequate revision and timely submission of the final version.

January 15: Interim Progress Report. This is an informal email to the Honours Coordinator from both you and your supervisor summarizing the progress made on revision of the thesis draft, alerting the coordinator of any possible problems. You and your supervisor may write these reports individually. Be aware that if there is a significant difference between your supervisor's perception of your progress and your perception of your progress, the Honours Coordinator will arrange a discussion/meeting to address the gap.

March 12: A provisional "final" draft of the entire thesis must be in your supervisor's hands by this date for final editorial insight, feedback, and time for your revisions before the final copy is sent out to your committee members.

April 01 - April 15: (Deadline depends on date of your oral exam). The FINAL copy of the thesis must be submitted to examiners two weeks before your oral exam takes place. Your NOTICE of Oral Exam ([Form 3](#)) is also due by this date.

April 15 – April 30: Oral Examination period. Your oral exam of your thesis will normally be scheduled during this time. Your committee members will submit [Form 4](#) to the chair of the oral exam before it begins. During the oral exam, you will be asked to discuss your area of interest, and to clarify, expand on, speculate beyond, and develop the ideas in your thesis. Examiners may also ask you about any problems, obscurities or omissions in the thesis, and you will have an opportunity to respond to their questions or concerns.

After the oral examination, your supervisor will assign your grade, in consultation with the other members of the committee. Your supervisor will submit [Form 5](#) no later than one week following the oral examination.

April 22 – May 06: The final corrected thesis (an electronic copy AND a printed hard copy) is due within one week after the oral exam. Submit them to the Honours Administrative Assistant, Kristine Ennis, along with [Form 6](#).