

FYC 6970
Thesis Proposal Writing
Course Syllabus
Summer C 2023

Course Meeting Info: **Tuesdays, Periods 4-5 12:30 PM – 3:15 PM**
 Thursdays Periods 4 12:30 PM – 1:45 PM

Classroom Location: MCCD 3042

Credit Hours: 3 credits

Instructor: Dr. Larry Forthun
Associate Chair & Associate Professor
Family, Youth & Community Sciences

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Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description

This course focuses on the application of principles, practices, and strategies for conducting social and behavioral research in family, youth, and community sciences.

Prerequisites

Registration is departmentally controlled based on instructor approval.

Main Course Goals

The primary goal of this course is for students to gain in-depth knowledge on preparing a thesis or dissertation proposal related to family, youth and community sciences and apply that knowledge to their own research area of interest. Students will identify the parts of each of the first three chapters of a proposal as well as their function. They will write drafts of each of the three proposal chapters and integrate instructor feedback into each chapter. By the end of the course, students will have completed a working draft of their thesis or dissertation proposal that may be reviewed by the student's committee for their defense. Students will also have the opportunity to practice their proposal presentation and integrate feedback from peers and the instructor.

Major Course Objectives

- Identify issues and gaps in the literature to research for a thesis or dissertation topic
- Review the existing literature following structured guidelines
- Determine what landmark research studies have been completed on the thesis/dissertation topic as well as the current state of knowledge
- Identify at least one overarching theory that will guide the study
- Develop a conceptual model based on the overarching theory and the empirical review of the literature
- Articulate 2 – 3 research questions that will be explored during the study including hypotheses and analytic strategy
- Operationalize the key variables that will be explored in the study
- Create an appropriate research design for the study
- Identify any barriers to the execution of a quality study
- Present a draft research proposal presentation for feedback from instructor and peers

Required Reading

Terrell, S.R. (2016). *Writing a proposal for your dissertation: Guidelines and examples*. The Guilford Press. [Available full text through course reserve](#).

Sarnecka, B.W. (2019). *The writing workshop: Write more, write better, be happier in academia* (n.p.): Author. [Available in Canvas](#).

Publication manual of the American Psychological Association: The official guide to APA style. (Seventh edition.). (2020). American Psychological Association.

Recommended Reading

Roberts. (2010). *The dissertation journey: A practical and comprehensive guide to planning, writing, and defending your dissertation* (2nd ed.). Corwin Press.

Course Expectations

Each student is expected to be an active and regular participant in class discussions. Students should come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings and their own research interests and to ask questions related to course topics. Students are also expected to facilitate the engagement of classmates and engage in active listening.

A student's committee chair may require more than what is required for this course for the final proposal. This course is aimed at completing a first draft only. The final proposal must be approved by the committee chair prior to scheduling the proposal meeting with the entire committee. Therefore, the suggested minimum length and assignments are for the purposes of this course only.

Students must: (a) be aware of the UF Graduate School policy and procedures for Thesis/Dissertation, (b) follow the Scientific Method/Research process, and (c) have and work on your own ideas, as approved by your Chair and/or Committee.

Course Assignments

This course will focus on the development of a draft research dissertation or thesis proposal; therefore, it will lay out individual parts of the proposal with instructions and set deadlines. Some assignments are small steps in the process of proposal preparation that will lead you to completion of the larger parts. The weight of assignment grades will reflect the rigor and the amount of work required to complete each part. All detailed instructions for individual assignments are on Canvas under “Assignments”.

Short Assignments (Total 310 points max)

Assignments include short in-class and out-of-class activities that students will be instructed to complete during the semester. These assignments are to facilitate critical thinking about the student’s thesis or dissertation topic and in-class discussion. They will help students be more specific when identifying the aims of the study. These short assignments will only be submitted one time and may not be redone to earn more points during Summer B, therefore, it is important to get them done, to do them well, and submit them to Canvas on time.

1. 15 Journal Article Annotations: 10 points each for a total 150 points

Students will be required to search and select individual journal articles related to their research topic. These articles are to be summarized in annotation format (see handouts on Canvas) with each annotation approximately two (2) pages typed.

2. Thesis/Dissertation Example: 10 points total

Students will find a recent UF thesis/dissertation to use as their model throughout the course. It should be close to their topic. These can be found using the UF Library website. Submit the citation, abstract, and a discussion of why this thesis/dissertation is chosen as the best model.

3. Problem Statement (Ch. 1): 20 points total

Students will write one clear problem statement focusing on the variables in their study. Later, this will be turned into a one-page Introduction to Chapter One.

4. Research Questions and Hypotheses (Ch. 1): 20 points total

Students will write their research questions (RQ). For this class, narrow it down to no more than three questions. For each RQ, write a corresponding hypothesis (Ho). Using the provided Research Roadmap, place the Hypothesis under the corresponding RQ in your document. Try to have directionality in your questions and hypotheses and have your numbering align (Ex: RQ1, Ho1; RQ2, Ho2; etc.).

5. Research Roadmap (Ch. 3): 20 points total

The Research Roadmap provides a framework for Chapter 3 and helps to identify RQs, Hypotheses, measurement, type of analysis, and variables.

6. Theory Identification (Ch. 2): 40 points total

Submit a one-page description of the theory that informs the study with the name, who is credited for its' development, and a brief overview.

7. 5 Checkpoints: 10 points each for a total of 50 points

Ten points will be awarded for each meeting with your dissertation/thesis committee chair to discuss your progress. [Note: You may meet with your Chair more often on your own, but this is the minimum.]

Chapter 1: Introduction (Total 100 points max)

Chapter One will be on the Introduction to the research topic. Each section of the chapter will be written using research references to provide support. Research support for *each* part must consist of a minimum of two journal articles or relevant book chapters or citations.

Font: Times New Roman 12 pt., paper and references in APA format; double-spaced; 1" margins. Suggested Length: 6-8 pages. Prepare a separate Reference list with at least 6 references and attach it to the assignment at the end.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature (Total 250 points max)

Chapter Two is a very detailed review of the research literature related to the research topic. Since points are given for each annotated article, this chapter is for the summary of what has been completed and synthesized. It is not based on a copy/paste of annotations into chapter format. Students are expected to make the annotations relevant to their topic and summarize across the sources. It is best to sort your journal articles into sub-categories by topics, ranging from major to minor. An outline of your Chapter Two will be instrumental in assisting you to produce a well-organized chapter. Chapter Two is completed in two parts: Part (a) will be the review of the theory that informs the study, worth 100 points. Part (b) will be an introduction to the study conceptual model and a review of current empirical research studies as they relate to the conceptual model, worth 150 points. Suggested length: 20 pages Total: Part A Theory, 8-10 pages; Part B Research Studies, 9-11 pages.

Chapter 3: Method (Total 150 points max)

Chapter Three will lay out the research plan for your study. In this chapter, the parts will detail how you propose to conduct your research. This chapter is important and must be well thought out. It is based on your ability to describe the research process. This chapter will include (but is not limited to) the

- Purpose and Objectives of the study;
- a description of the Population/Sampling;
- a description and example of the Survey Instrument(s)
- as well as a Justification for the Instrument(s);
- a description of the Data Collection Procedures;
- the plan for the Data Analysis; and
- Research Roadmap

Suggested length—11-15-pp. including minimum of six references and the Research Roadmap.

Presentation and Slides (Total 150 points max)

Students will prepare a draft presentation in PowerPoint and will do a proposal presentation to their fellow classmates for feedback in a constructive environment. The slides are worth 50 points and the presentation is worth 100 points. Suggested length: 10 slides; 20 minute presentation, 10 minute Q&A.

Grading Criteria

Assignment	Total Points
Short Assignments	Total: 310
15 Journal Article Annotations	150
Thesis/Diss. Example	10
Problem Statement (Ch. 1)	20
RQ's/Ho (Ch. 1)	20
Research Roadmap Draft (Ch. 3)	20
Theory Identification (Ch. 2)	40
5 Checkpoints with Chair	50
Chapter 1 Introduction Draft	Total: 100
Chapter 2 Review of Literature Draft	Total: 250
Part A (theory related)	100
Part B (recent research)	150
Chapter 3 Methods Draft	Total: 150
Presentation and Slides	Total: 150
Slides	50
Presentation	70
Peer Review	30
Total	960 total points

Grading Scale

A	93.5-100%
A-	89.5-93.4%
B+	86.5-89.4%
B	82.5-86.4%
B-	79.5-82.4%
C+	76.5-79.4%
C	72.5-76.4%
C-	69.5-72.4%
D	59.5-69.4%
E	≤59.4%

Course Outline

Week	Day	Topic	Assignments Due
1	16-May	1. Introductions 2. Course Information 3. Discuss Assignments 4. Discuss journal article annotations	a) Review syllabus/course outline; discuss course requirements
2	23-May	1. Discuss Readings 2. Discuss journal articles	a) Journal Article Annotations (4) b) Problem Statement c) Purpose of Study
3	30-May	1. Discuss Readings 2. Discuss journal articles	a) Journal Article Annotations (8) b) Introduction (Problem, Purpose) c) Rationale for study d) Significance of Study e) Research Questions and Hypotheses f) Thesis/Dissertation Example g) Schedule first meeting with your chair
4	6-June	1. Discuss Readings 2. Discuss journal articles	a) Journal Article Annotations (3) b) DRAFT Chapter 1 c) Definition of Key Terms d) Research Roadmap e) Theory Identification
5	13-June	1. Discuss Readings	a) Theory Section b) Summary of Week 4 meeting with chair
6	20-June	1. Discuss Readings	a) Review of Literature b) Method, Part 1
	27-June	NO CLASS	a) Method, Part 2
SUMMER BREAK: JUNE 26 – JUNE 30			

Course Outline

Week	Day	Topic	Assignments Due
7	4-July	NO CLASS	a) Meet with chair to develop next steps/revisions for Chapter 1
8	11-Jul	Individual Meeting with Instructor by Appointment	a) Work on Chapter 1 revisions
9	18-Jul7	Individual Meeting with Instructor by Appointment	a) Revised Chapter 1 b) Meet with chair to develop next steps/revisions for Chapter 2
10	25-Jul	Individual Meeting with Instructor by Appointment	a) Revised Chapter 2 b) Meet with chair to develop next steps/revisions for Chapter 3
11	1-Aug	Individual Meeting with Instructor by Appointment	a) Revised Chapter 3
12	8-Aug	Proposal Presentations	a) Thesis DRAFT b) In-class presentation, outline next steps, set tentative proposal date with chair

UF Policies

More information on UF grading policy may be found at:

[UF Graduate Catalog](#)

[Grades and Grading Policies](#)

Students Requiring Accommodations

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the [Disability Resource Center](#). It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. [Click here for guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner.](#)

Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. [Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students here.](#)

University Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted

for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” [The Honor Code](#) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Software Use

All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate. We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to uphold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

Student Privacy

There are federal laws protecting your privacy with regards to grades earned in courses and on individual assignments. For more information, please see the [Notification to Students of FERPA Rights](#).

Campus Resources:

Health and Wellness

U Matter, We Care:

If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

Counseling and Wellness Center: counseling.ufl.edu/cwc, and 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS)
Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.

University Police Department at 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies), or police.ufl.edu.

Academic Resources

[E-learning technical support](#), 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to Learning-support@ufl.edu.

[Career Resource Center](#), Reitz Union, 392-1601. Career assistance and counseling.

[Library Support](#), Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

[Teaching Center](#), Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.

[Writing Studio](#), 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

[Student Complaints Campus](#)

[On-Line Students Complaints](#)

University Policy on In-Class Recording

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Other Course Policies

Rules for Class Discussion

Respect others. This course covers a variety of sensitive issues, and students in the class come from a variety of backgrounds. We expect a class atmosphere of tolerance and respect for every individual and their opinion. If anyone feels they have been harmed or misrepresented—by the instructor or any individual in the class—I urge you to speak with me so that the problem can be dealt with immediately. Please do not let feelings build up and interfere with your experience in this course.

Expectations Of Confidentiality

Respect for confidentiality of personal information shared by your classmates is an absolute must. Do not talk to others about personal information your classmates share in discussions. Likewise, if you choose to share personal information or use a friend or family member as a case example, please refrain from using their names and/or identifying information.

Religious Observance

Please check your calendars against the course schedule. Any student having a conflict in the class schedule due to religious observances should contact the instructor as soon as possible so that they can make necessary arrangements.

Note that the instructor reserves the right to adjust the syllabus as needed.