SCHC 390 H01: Thesis Proseminar
South Carolina Honors College
Fall 2025

GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION

Time and Place: Monday 9:40-10:30 a.m.; HRH B119
Credit Hours: 1 (pass/fail)
Instructor: Iddrisu Kambala Mohammed
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COURSE DESCRIPTION
This one-credit research course is designed to help students prepare for the SCHC senior thesis process and to take best advantage of the resources available at the University of South Carolina. Unlike the online, asynchronous version, this course meets in person once a week and provides students a more active and hands-on opportunity to deepen understanding of the content. Class sessions are reserved for discussion, collaborative exercises, and the workshopping of assignments for more immediate feedback from classmates and the instructor. Access to all course materials from the online, asynchronous version will also be available via Blackboard.

COURSE OBJECTIVES & LEARNING GOALS
Although each thesis project will vary by discipline, methodology, and scope, by the end of the semester students should have completed all course assignments, culminating in an 8-to-12-page thesis proposal (double-spaced) that follows guidelines outlined in this syllabus and on Blackboard.

In this course, we will work together to:
- Take your interest in a topic and narrow it to a manageable research question.
- Develop techniques for evaluating the existing literature on your topic.
- Produce a full-fledged research proposal for your honors thesis.
- Contact and secure a full-time faculty member who will work with you as your thesis director.

APPOINTMENTS WITH YOUR INSTRUCTOR
I highly encourage students to schedule at least one one-on-one meeting with me during the semester. It is helpful to review the information on Blackboard prior to the meeting and to come to the meeting with a list of questions or inquiries you would like to discuss. Sometimes, it is beneficial for students to meet multiple times to talk through the research process. Please use the following link to schedule an appointment: sc.campus.eab.com. Once you have logged in to EAB Navigate, you can select "Make an Appointment," then Honors College Advising > Honors: Senior Thesis as the reason for your appointment.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The class is collaborative in nature, so attendance is required. Life obviously gets in the way sometimes, so if you're unable to make it to class on a given day, please email me to inform me of your absence. You are allowed one unexcused absence per semester without having your grade impacted.

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING
This is a pass (S) /fail (U) 1-credit hour course. You must submit all assignments and score a minimum of 70 on each to pass the class. You will complete four written assignments, submit a director contract, and engage in classwork (group work, a final presentation, etc.) that will count towards your participation score. The written assignments and director contract are described below.

All assignments are mandatory and have strict deadlines.
Late submissions will receive partial credit and delayed feedback. Late submissions will not be accepted more than one week after the deadline. If you need an extension, please email me, or schedule an appointment via EAB/Navigate prior to the due date (the earlier the better). Extensions requested *after* the due date are unlikely to be honored without penalty.

All assignments should be submitted to the appropriate portal on Blackboard. All assignments should be submitted as either an MS Word document or PDF.

1) **Initial Research Question due** <mark>Friday, September 12 by midnight</mark>
For this assignment, you will begin conducting preliminary research on topics that interest you. You will also read the "Thesis Proposal Guidelines" and *at least two* examples of thesis proposals submitted in previous semesters (both documents are located on Blackboard in Module 4 and in the "Thesis Resources" folder). You will then submit via Blackboard the following:

PART I: The Research Question
1. After reading through preliminary research related to your topic, write a concise preliminary research question. ***To begin, make a copy and*** complete the *"Writing Purposeful Questions" worksheet (link here) to help you craft your question.* You will submit your completed copy.

PART II:
Then, in a separate document, complete the following:

2. Write the Research Question that you developed by completing the worksheet and then include a paragraph discussing your motivation for pursuing the question. How is this question worthy of a thesis? Why is it significant?

3. Include citations for **two** scholarly works. The citation format (MLA, Chicago, APA, etc.) is up to you. Let us see what you consulted in your preliminary research.

4. Incorporation and citation of research throughout each of the sections is critical for a strong proposal. Based on what is typical for your proposed field of study, what type of citation style will you use in your proposal (e.g., MLA, APA, Chicago Manual, etc.)? What is one database you can use to search for accepted academic sources on your topic (e.g., any of the subject specific databases listed on the library's website and our Blackboard page under Module Three).

To be clear, on Blackboard, you should <u>upload two files</u>: 1.) Your completed copy of the "Writing Purposeful Questions" exercise; and 2.) a document (MS Word or PDF) containing responses to prompts 2-4.

2) **Thesis Director Assignment due** <mark>Friday, September 26 by midnight</mark>

This assignment is to jump-start and aid your search for a thesis director. **To complete this assignment, you will need to read and be familiar with ALL the resources in Module Two: Finding a Thesis Director.** You will need to identify three potential faculty members who qualify to be your director using the resources provided on Blackboard, paying close attention to who can (and cannot) serve as a director. You will then draft a professional email to <u>one</u> of these potential directors, using the resources and examples of professional emails.

In the Blackboard portal, upload an MS Word Document (or PDF) answering the following questions:

1. Identify three potential thesis directors (list their name, title, department, and email address).

   Example: Dr. John Muckelbauer; Associate Professor of Rhetoric and Composition; Department of English; muckelba@sc.edu

2. Write a draft of a professional email to one of the potential directors you have identified. Please remember to include a subject line, and utilize the examples provided on Blackboard.

Please note: *You do not need to send the email yet*; however, the sooner you reach out to potential directors, the better chance you have of securing one by the end of the semester. **You should reach out to potential directors as soon as possible** and NO LATER than one month before the final assignment (Assignment #5, the thesis director contract) is due.

3) **Annotated Bibliography due** <mark>Friday, October 10 by midnight</mark>

Part I. Annotated Bib

For this assignment, you will select five academic sources related to your chosen thesis topic. These sources should demonstrate that there is sufficient scholarly/academic support for your proposed topic. In other words, you need to find at least five academic sources that will help you develop your idea further and support your research. After selecting and thoroughly reading each of your five sources, begin your annotated bibliography with a bibliographic citation in an accepted academic format for your field. Each citation should then be followed by an annotation, a brief (approximately 150-200 words) descriptive and evaluative paragraph, written *in your own words*. The purpose of the annotation is to inform your reader of the relevance, accuracy, and quality of the sources cited. A successful annotation will accomplish the following: 1. Accurately and succinctly summarize the source, including main points and takeaways; 2. Explain how the source fits in with the other sources you have (how does it add to, agree with, or contradict other sources); and 3. Explain why the source is valuable to your project – what does it add, prove, interrupt, or support?

Part II. Revised Research Question

Now that you've completed more substantial research, your research question may have developed further (or completely changed). It should certainly be more precise and narrower in scope. Revisit the "Writing Purposeful Questions" worksheet (Link here) and write an updated version of your RQ. This RQ will guide your subsequent research and the writing of your proposal.

4) **Thesis Proposal due Friday, <mark>November 21 by midnight</mark>**

You will submit an 8–12-page proposal written per the required guidelines and format detailed in the Thesis Proposal Guidelines (available on Blackboard). Any deviation from these guidelines must be approved in writing prior to the submission deadline. Additional resources for writing your proposal are available on Blackboard and students are highly encouraged to make an appointment with one of the librarians or with the Writing Center for feedback prior to submission. Submissions should be made on Blackboard under "Assignments."

Thesis proposals will be reviewed by your course instructor and/or the graduate teaching assistants. The rubric we will use to evaluate your proposal is also available on Blackboard under "Course Documents." **You should expect to receive feedback by late November/Early December via Blackboard—<u>reviewing this feedback is your responsibility.</u>**

Proposal Resubmissions: In some cases, you may be asked to rewrite and resubmit your proposal—this will be indicated on your rubric along with any changes that you are being asked to make. The **Proposal resubmission due date will be indicated on your feedback form.**

Thesis Director Contract form due <mark>Friday, November 14 by midnight</mark>

Thesis Director Contracts must be signed by a USC Faculty member (Clinical Assistant Professor, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Professor, etc.) who has agreed to serve as your thesis director. It is imperative that you begin contacting faculty members *at least* a month in advance of this deadline. (The second assignment is geared toward helping you do this.) The Thesis Director Contract is a form that is available on Blackboard—after it is signed, you will upload the form with additional information online using the Thesis Director Contract Submission page linked under Assignments. You can also find the Director Contract in Module Two.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

<u>Utilizing these resources is NOT mandatory to pass the course</u> but is highly encouraged and will be extremely beneficial for developing and writing a successful thesis.

Research Librarian Appointments
We will visit the library for a presentation and work week early in the semester, but research librarians are always available for support. Schedule an appointment or workshop with a research librarian [here](). Research librarians are underutilized resources and are of great help, particularly in the early stages of your research.

Writing Center Appointments
The writing center is a great resource for students, and you can schedule an appointment with a writing center tutor at any time. Virtual appointments are also available. Schedule an appointment [here]().

COURSE SCHEDULE

8/25: Course introduction

9/1: ***No Class Meeting, Labor Day***

9/8: Honing a topic and narrowing the RQ ==Assignment #1 due on 9/12.==

9/15: Intro to Library Research
Note: Class will meet in Thomas Cooper library, room TBD)

9/22: Securing a thesis director/Finalizing the RQ ==Assignment #2 due on 9/26.==

9/29: Writing the Annotated Bibliography

10/6: Annotated Bib Work Week ==Assignment #3 due on 10/10.==

10/13: Writing the proposal.

10/20: Methods

10/27: Research Librarian Work Week

11/3: Writing a Thesis Statement

11/10: Peer review proposal drafts ==Director Contracts due on 11/14.==

11/17: Proposal Presentations ==Assignment #4 due on 11/21==.

11/24: ***No Class Meeting, Thanksgiving Break***

12/1: Proposal Presentations

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

As a student of the university, you agree to comply with the University Honor Code, Carolina Creed, and all other policies of the University of South Carolina. Violations of any codes, creeds, rules, or policies are offenses that carry severe consequences. Students are expected to uphold the school's standard of conduct relating to academic honesty. Students assume full responsibility for the content and integrity of the academic work they submit. The guiding principle of academic integrity shall be that a student's submitted work, examinations, reports, and projects must be that of the student's own work.

Students shall be guilty of violating the honor code if they:

1. Represent the work of others as one's own.
2. Use or obtain unauthorized assistance in any academic work.
3. Give unauthorized assistance to other students.
4. Modify, without instructor approval, an examination, paper, record, or report for the purpose of obtaining additional credit.
5. Misrepresent the content of submitted work.
6. Observe any cheating activity and fail to report it to the instructor.

The penalty for violating the honor code is severe. Any student violating the honor code is subject to receive a failing grade for the course and will be reported to the Office of Student Affairs. If a student is unclear about whether a particular situation may constitute an honor code violation, the student should meet with the instructor to discuss the situation. All University of South Carolina rules and codes governing plagiarism are in effect for this course. Further information on the policies and procedures of the University of South Carolina can be found in the Carolina Community. Knowing the boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable practices is sometimes tricky, and we'll discuss any questions you have in class. Plagiarism results in an automatic "U" for the course.

Academic Conduct Regulations
Infractions of academic discipline include, but are not limited to:
- Cheating: This refers to conduct during quizzes and examinations, which shall include using electronic, oral, or written information not specifically permitted by the instructor. It shall also include receiving or using electronic, oral, or written information from any person other than the instructor. It shall further include stealing, buying, selling, or using any copy of an examination before it has been administered.
- Plagiarism: This refers to submitting, as a student's own work, material obtained from another source without indicating the source from which it was obtained. It further includes letting another person compose or rewrite a student's assignment. A student who assists in the forms of dishonesty mentioned above shall be considered equally as guilty as the student who cheated or plagiarized.

Carolinian Creed

The community of scholars at the University of South Carolina is dedicated to personal and academic excellence. Choosing to join the community obligates each member to a code of civilized behavior.
As a Carolinian…

- I will practice personal and academic integrity;
- I will respect the dignity of all persons;
- I will respect the rights and property of others
- I will discourage bigotry, while striving to learn from differences in people, ideas and opinions
- I will demonstrate concern for others, their feelings, and their need for conditions which support their work and development.

Allegiance to these ideals requires each Carolinian to refrain from and discourage behaviors, which threaten the freedom and respect every individual deserves.

Mental Health

If stress is impacting you or getting in the way of your ability to do your schoolwork, maintain relationships, eat, sleep, or enjoy yourself, please reach out to any of our mental health resources. Most of these services are offered at no cost as they are covered by the Student Health Services tuition fee. For all available mental health resources, check out **Student Health Services Mental Health** and the quick reference list below.

- Wellness Coaching can help you improve in areas related to emotional and physical wellbeing (e.g., sleep, resiliency, balanced eating and more) – schedule an appointment at (803) 777-6518 or on **MyHealthSpace.**
- Access virtual self-help modules via **Therapy Assistance Online (TAO) –** see **TAO registration instructions**.
- Access additional articles and videos on health and wellness topics on the Wellness Hub, **thriveatcarolina.com,** or by downloading the **CampusWell** app and searching for University of South Carolina.
- Counseling & Psychiatry offers individual and group counseling and psychiatric services – schedule an appointment at (803) 777-5223 or on **MyHealthSpace.**
- Access the 24-hr Mental Health Support Line at (833) 664-2854.
- Access an anonymous **mental health screening program.**

Accommodating Disabilities

Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and may need accommodations to fully participate in this class, contact the **Student Disability Resource Center**: 777-6142, TDD 777-6744, email **sadrc@mailbox.sc.edu**, or stop by Close-Hipp Suite 102. All accommodations must be approved through the Student Disability Resource Center.