

TFM 761
Thesis Proposal Seminar
Wednesday 2—4:40 COM108

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students are encouraged to consider literary and filmic precedents and the social, political, economic, historical and cultural contexts of their production work. Your thesis production projects should show evidence of a critical concern with formal issues as well as technical excellence.

This course is designed to enable students to conceptualize and write a TFM Masters Thesis Proposal. This class includes individual writing, group analysis of examples, and peer feedback. In addition to the work done directly in class, students will identify and consult with the members of their thesis committees, especially the thesis chair.

OBJECTIVES

- Identify and express in writing the central concept of TFM Masters Thesis proposal.
- Identify and express in writing the significant subproblems involved in the creation of the creative project.
- Assemble a bibliography and filmography relating to the creative project, discussing in specific terms the relevance of each entry to the project.
- Identify and justify the aesthetic strategies involved in the execution of the creative project.
- Master the required presentation format (MLA), and source citation protocols.

EVALUATION

Attendance and Class Participation

Regular attendance and active participation is expected and essential. The success of the seminar and the success of your proposal depends on a high level of trust and critical interaction among students. Absences will negatively impact your evaluation.

Chapter 1	25%
Chapter 2	35%
Chapter 3	15%

Appendix 15%
Treatment and/or Script
Budget
Timeline
Crew

Power Point Presentation of Film and related Literature 10%
Each student will make a class presentation and lead discussions. Students will choose a film and theme of direct relevance to their thesis project. Students will discuss the genre and theme of the film, and relate it to a reading that will inform their Thesis Proposal.

At least one week prior to each presentation, the presenter will provide copies of appropriate critical readings to the class. Please post your reading on the Forum (BB) or make copies available. Half the grade for this assignment depends upon timely delivery of the reading and thoughtful discussion of it.

These readings should compliment the film screened and the themes discussed. (Note that critical readings are not usually found on the internet. This will require research in books and/or professional journals.) The class session itself will include a PowerPoint presentation, the screening of a portion of the film selected by the presenter, and a discussion of the film and the readings in terms of the presenter's thesis proposal. The PowerPoint will be emailed to the instructor.

Reflection Journal/Artist's Notebook

Students should keep a journal and make at least weekly entries. These entries can consider the challenges and triumphs of the creative process. It's a place to record significant observations; to record dreams; and to pose questions for further research and development. You may include notes about the development of characters, conflicts and locations. The journal is a place for you to systematically reflect and consider the progress you are making in your creative journey. Insofar as you may choose to critically consider the "process of your production" in your thesis Chapter 4, the journal can provide important "raw footage."

THESIS NOTEBOOK

Each student will create a thesis notebook.
In the inside front cover affix a copy of the Assignment Due dates as outlined below.

This notebook is a spiral binder, with hole punched papers (not plastic sleeves), with dividers for each sub-section of Chapters 1-3 plus the Appendix. The notebook will be organized so that the most recent draft of each section is on top and the worksheet for that section is last.

The notebook should conform to the outline below which describes Chapter 1 with 6 subsections; Chapter 2 with 5 subsections; Chapter 3 with 2 subsections plus an Appendix including the Treatment and/or Script, Budget, Timeline and Crew.

Include completed Peer Review Forms in your notebook in the appropriate section.

When a chapter is completed and ready for grading all the final versions of each subsection should be compiled and placed by a divider identified as **Final Draft Chapter # Date.**

Chapter 1: THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

- Statement of Problem
- Statement of the Sub problems
- Goals and Objectives
- Definition of Terms
- Delimitations
- Significance of Project

Chapter 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE, FILMS AND GENRES

- Literature on Project Topic
- Literature on Project Style
- Related Film Theory
- Films and/or genres that relate Thematically
- Films and/or genres that relate stylistically

Chapter 3: METHODS AND PROCEDURES

- Formal approach (style, aesthetic approach)
- Tactics and strategies employed in solving stated problem

Appendix:

- Treatment and/or Script
- Budget
- Timeline
- Crew

Writing Style and Mechanics

A thesis should be clear, concise and coherent. It makes a case based on evidence and research. The best academic writing is not personal or colloquial; nor is it unnecessarily abstract or convoluted.

See the recommended texts for guidance regarding both writing style and the intellectual, emotional and psychological challenges of the process. How long should your thesis proposal be? How long should your film be? Only as long as necessary. Demonstrate your familiarity with the topics, techniques and approaches you are proposing. Rely on the writings and insights of the best scholars and filmmakers you can identify. Review the examples of successful theses on BB. Frame the writing process as an opportunity to become a better, more grounded filmmaker, rather than as an obstacle to be overcome.

Take particular care regarding word choice, spelling, grammar and sentence construction. Read your work out loud. Does it make sense? Is it easy to follow? Ask friends and colleagues whose writing you respect to look over a draft. This class is best used as forum for the development of ideas; polishing your prose means making a commitment to write and rewrite, to revise and reconsider. A poorly crafted proposal is an impediment. If your writing skills are not as strong as you would like, seek out help at the writing center or from a more experienced writer and editor.

See the resources on BB under Research and Writing. In particular it is essential that you format your proposal following the MLA style guidelines.

Screenplays should be in standard screenplay format. Documentary scripts can be in two column AV format.

Make your words as expressive as your film.

Budgets

The budget should reflect the prevailing rates for all equipment and services. It should reflect a realistic estimate of the time commitment required to complete the production. See the templates on BB.

Include columns that reflect Cash-on-Hand; In-kind Contributions and To be Raised. The advantages of this more rigorous budgeting are a realistic valuation of your time and effort, and the creation of a model that will be useful in producing professional productions.

Working with a Thesis Chair

The sooner you identify and recruit a chair, the more you and your work will benefit. It takes time and some effort to build a strong relationship with your chair. Faculty generally do not react well to last minute requests with a looming deadline.

Pick a faculty member who has a clear appreciation both for your talents and for the story you are choosing to tell. Develop working methods grounded in clear communication and mutual respect. Your chair can be an invaluable source of resources, suggestions and useful criticism. Chairs take no small pleasure in the success of their students.

See Chapter 3 in *Secrets for a Successful Dissertation* and Chapter 2 in *Writing Your Dissertation in Fifteen Minutes a Day*.

Assignments and Due Dates

Assignments

Rewriting and revising is expected and encouraged. Feel free to work ahead of the schedule below. This is much preferable to falling behind.

Work is due on the dates indicated below at the beginning of the class session. Assignments should be 12 pt font, Times New Roman, double-spaced and submitted as hardcopy.

Note that a draft is usually due in class a week before it is submitted for a grade. This first due date is an opportunity for you to get feedback from peers and the instructor. It is essential that all of these deadlines be met. Failure to do so will seriously jeopardize the likelihood of your thesis proposal being approved for production beginning Fall 11.

Unless requested by the instructor emailed work will not be accepted.
Late work will not be accepted.

Note this timeline does not include the dates of the individual in-class PowerPoint presentations.

Chapter 1: THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

	Due Class	Date Completed
Treatment and/or Scripts	2	
Abstract	2	
Worksheet Problem and Sub-problem	2	
Statement of Problem	3	
Statement of the Sub-problems	3	
Worksheet Goals and Objectives	4	
Goals and Objectives	4	
Worksheet Definition of Terms	4	
Definition of Terms	4	
Worksheet Delimitations	5	
Delimitations	5	
Worksheet Significance of Project	5	
Significance of Project	5	
Draft of Chapter 1 for grade	6	Grade:

Chapter 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE, FILMS AND GENRES

	Due Class	Date Completed
Worksheet Literature on Project Topic	6	
Literature on Project Topic	6 and 7	
Worksheet Related Film Theory	7	
Related Film Theory	8	
Worksheet Films and/or genres that relate Thematically	8	
Films and/or genres that relate Thematically	9	
Worksheet Films and/or genres that relate stylistically	9	
Films and/or genres that relate stylistically	10	
Draft of Chapter 2 for grade	12	Grade:

Chapter 3: METHODS AND PROCEDURES

	Due Class	Date Completed
Worksheet Methods and Procedures	12	
Formal approach/Methods and Procedures	12	
Draft of Chapter 3 for grade	13	Grade:

Appendix:

	Due in Class	Date Completed
Abstract, Treatment and/or Script	2	
Budget	13	
Timeline	13	
Crew	13	
Submission of Appendix for Grading	14	Grade:

Week 15 Correct Formatting and Review. Identify any remaining revisions. Prepare Title Page and Table of Contents.

Week 16 Secure Committee Signatures and submit complete proposal in hardcopy and electronically. **See FORMS on BB.**

PLAGIARISM

Students should be especially careful to avoid “borrowing” from internet sources and each other. There will be “zero-tolerance” for plagiarism. Cheating or plagiarism will result in an “F” for the course and a report to the office of Student Rights and Responsibilities. Be sure to cite all of your sources with page numbers and url’s as appropriate.

Required Book

SDSU Master Thesis and Project Manual

Recommended

[You must produce a Works Cited for all quotes. A correct citation includes: Author. *Title*. Place of Publication: Publisher. Date of Publication. Medium.]

Bolker, Joan. *Writing Your Dissertation in Fifteen Minutes a Day: A Guide To Starting, Revising, and Finishing Your Doctoral Thesis*. NY: Holt, 1998. Print.

Fitzpatrick, Jacqueline, Debra J. Wright and Jan Secrist. *Secrets for a Successful Dissertation*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1998. Print.

Lowenstein, Stephen, ed. *My First Movie*. NY: Penguin Books, 2000. Print
Strunk, Jr. William. *The Elements of Style* Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2000. Print.

Shertzer, Margaret D. *The Elements of Grammar*. NY: Longman, 1996. Print.

Research Guides

Corrigan, Timothy. *Short Guide to Writing about Film*. New York: Longman, 2010. Print.

<http://infodome.sdsu.edu/research/guides/film.shtml>

<http://infodome.sdsu.edu/research/guides/filmcriticism.shtml>

Also see BB Forum

IDENTIFYING YOUR PROJECT CONCEPT

WEEK 1

Classwork: Project concept brainstorm, examples of abstracts.
Be prepared to tell us what you know about your proposed thesis project.
Begin drafting an Abstract and Treatment.

Choose a writing partner.
Sign up for presentations.
Thesis Choice Pro Con Worksheet (BB)
Library Orientation 3:30 –4:30 LA78

WEEK 2

Resources BB Sample Thesis and ITVS Treatment click Proposal Chapter scroll to end.

Writing Due:
Treatment and/or Scripts
Abstract
Worksheet Problem and Sub-problem

Classwork: Peer feedback. Bring Peer Review Forms (BB) to class each week.

Note: Identify and consider possible committee members

Chapter 1: THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

WEEK 3

Writing Due:
Statement of Problem
Statement of the Sub-problems
Note: Set up meetings with possible committee members this week

WEEK 4

Writing Due:
Worksheet Goals and Objectives
Goals and Objectives
Worksheet Definition of Terms
Definition of Terms
Classwork: Peer feedback

WEEK 5

Writing Due:

Worksheet Delimitations

Delimitations

Worksheet Significance of Project

Significance of Project

Classwork: Feedback

Note: Your committee should now be established. From here on in, you should be in communication with at least your chair regarding the development of your project. You should consult with your chair and/or other committee members as you develop production elements such as script, schedule, budget etc.

Chapter 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE, FILMS AND GENRES

WEEK 6

Writing Due:

Draft of Chapter 1 for grade

Worksheet Literature on Project Topic

Literature on Project Topic

Classwork: Feedback

WEEK 7

Writing Due:

Literature on Project Style

Worksheet Related Film Theory

Classwork: Feedback

WEEK 8

Writing Due:

Related Film Theory

Worksheet Films and/or genres that relate Thematically

Classwork: Feedback

WEEK 9

Writing Due:

Films and/or genres that relate Thematically

Worksheet Films and/or genres that relate stylistically

Classwork: Feedback

WEEK 10

Writing Due: Films and/or genres that relate stylistically

Classwork: Feedback

WEEK 11 Spring Break No Class

Chapter 3: METHODS AND PROCEDURES

WEEK 12

Writing Due:

Draft of Chapter 2 for grade

Worksheet Methods and Procedures

Formal approach/Methods and Procedures

Classwork: Feedback

Appendix:

WEEK 13

Writing Due:

Draft of Chapter 3 for grade

Budget

Timeline

Crew

Classwork: Feedback

WEEK 14

Submission of Appendix for Grading

Classwork: Feedback

WEEK 15

No class ---individual meetings with students

Writing Due:

Week 15 Correct Formatting and Review. Identify any remaining revisions. Prepare Title Page and Table of Contents.

WEEK 16

ABSTRACT, FINAL PROPOSAL including Appendix, and COMMITTEE FORM DUE IN CLASS 5-4-11.

Secure Committee Signatures and submit scanned signature form, abstract and complete proposal in **hardcopy and electronically using the Dropbox on BB. See FORMS on BB.**

Name your files according to this protocol

lastname.committee.doc

lastname.abstract.doc

lastname.proposal.doc

With the endorsement of the instructor, the Committee Form and the Abstract will be forward by the instructor to the Faculty for their approval.

Students will be notified regarding the acceptance of their thesis proposal by email.

Students are expected to attend the Filmmakers Showcase in Don Powell May 19, 2011.

