Course information:

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1. Course name: Thesis Research 1

2. Department: Sociology Anthropology

3. Number: 492

4. Cluster requirement: Capstone Study

Faculty information:

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5. Name: Lisa Maya Knauer

6. Email: lknauer@umassd.edu

7. Phone: 508-999-8405

Required components:

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8. Master syllabus: [http:///webroots/www.umassd.edu/genedchecklist/holding/mastersyllabusthesis.docx](http://webroots/www.umassd.edu/genedchecklist/holding/mastersyllabusthesis.docx)

9. Course overview statement:

The senior thesis will be an in-depth examination of a specific and focused topic, based on student interest and experience. It fulfills the department’s overall learning goals by giving students an opportunity to integrate their learning in the program and produce original knowledge. The senior thesis is typically a 2-semester undertaking, and students register for SOC/ANT 492 in the first semester and SOC/ANT 493 in the second semester. SOC/ANT 492 replaces the senior capstone course (SOC/ANT 420) and SOC/ANT 493 replaces the internship seminar (SOC/ANT 450). The senior thesis is an independent research project carried out under the supervision of a full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty member. While the teaching method is one-on-one, it reflects the practices of a seminar class, including an emphasis on students as active participants in the creation of knowledge. The thesis project will integrate theory, methods, and knowledge from the field of study. Students will

 design and carry out an independent research project, based on secondary and/or primary research as appropriate to the topic and student interest. Students will communicate, both orally and in writing, the results of their research or project. The final product will be substantial research paper, 30 pages minimum, or an alternative format appropriate to the subject matter. Students will demonstrate literacy skills by selecting, evaluating, integrating and documenting information gathered from multiple sources into discipline specific writing. Students will present their completed thesis to a faculty committee consisting of their advisor and at least one other faculty member determined jointly by the student and the primary advisor. Students will be encouraged to present the results of their research in additional on-campus or external venues.

10. Signed faculty and chair sponsor sheet: sent separately.

11. Official course catalog description for the course:

Conduct an independent research project under independent faculty supervision. The completed thesis is expected to address an issue of significance in the field, integrate primary and secondary research, and result in a minimum of a 30-page paper. Completion of Thesis Research I and II may be substitued for the Internship and Senior Seminar requirements. By permission only. May be taken in sequence with 493 over two semesters for a total of 6 credits.

12. Course approval form: not entered.

DRAFT Master Syllabus

Course: SOC/ANT 492 Senior Thesis

University Studies Cluster 4A – Capstone Study

This University Studies Master Syllabus serves as a guide and standard for all instructors teaching an approved course in the University Studies program. Individual instructors have full academic freedom in teaching their courses, but as a condition of course approval, agree to focus on the outcomes listed below, to cover the identified material, to use these or comparable assignments as part of the course work, and to make available the agreed-upon artifacts for assessment of learning outcomes.

**COURSE OVERVIEW**

The senior thesis is an opportunity for advanced students to undertake original research under the guidance of one or more faculty members. The thesis is a rigorous independent study project, similar in scope and nature to the research projects required of students in the capstone seminar, but somewhat more in-depth and rigorous. It serves as an alternative means for students to complete the senior capstone requirement, although thesis students may enroll in SOC/ANT 420, the Senior Seminar, to fulfill upper-level elective requirements.

Each student will have a thesis committee including his or her primary faculty adviser (a tenured or tenure-track member of the department) and at least one other faculty member to be jointly agreed upon by the student and the faculty adviser. Working together with the faculty adviser, the student will design a research project, determine the appropriate research methods, and secure any necessary approvals. Since it usually takes at least two semesters to complete a thesis, SOC 492 is conceived as part of a two-semester sequence (SOC 492 followed by SOC 493). The result of the project will be a 35-50 page research paper, or a professional poster accompanied by a shorter paper, or an alternative format appropriate to the subject matter and methodology. SOC 493, the second semester of the thesis project, will fulfill University Studies Cluster 5B, as thesis students will be required to either use community-based research protocols or present the results of their research in a professional venue or community-based off-campus setting.

The thesis may be based on extensive engagement with secondary material, analysis of primary data collected by the student (e.g. interviews, survey results, observations), and/or a social action or applied research project designed and carried out by the student.

Students must engage with off-campus communities as part of their thesis project. They can satisfy this requirement through a research protocol that involves substantial off-campus work, or present the results of their research in a professional, off-campus setting such as the annual University of Massachusetts Undergraduate Research Conference.

All thesis projects should have the following components:

* Stated purpose of the project and central research questions
* Review of relevant research already conducted on the project topic
* Discussion of research methods
* Analysis of primary and/or secondary data
* Discussion of the contributions the project makes to the relevant field
* Complete and properly formatted works cited list

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

***Course-specific learning outcomes***

Through their thesis study, students will:

* Demonstrate familiarity with the principal discipline-specific approaches to the course topic
* Demonstrate the ability to critically interpret theoretical arguments and social science research, orally and in writing
* Demonstrate familiarity with key departmental learning objectives, and critical social science approaches to studying society and culture.
* Formulate a research topic appropriate to the subject matter of the course.
* Design and carry out an original, independent research project with a solid theoretical foundation appropriate to the subject matter, which integrates knowledge and skills gained in their major courses, and utilizing an effective research strategy.
* Synthesize the results of their independent research into a substantial product that demonstrates the following: effective, discipline-specific writing, use of relevant social science research, the ability to integrate material from multiple sources, and familiarity with one of the accepted methods of citation. The result will be a 35-50-page research paper, or an alternative format that demonstrates the same standard of proficiency.
* Demonstrate an advanced ability to effectively present their research results orally.

***University Studies Learning Outcomes***

Upon completion of the capstone study, students will be able to:

1. Synthesize the knowledge and skills gained within major courses, independently complete a research-based project or creative work and integrate the results of both in an open-ended project or experience (projects within the major are encouraged).

2. Integrate knowledge and principles from the field of study with those of the broader University Studies curriculum.

3. Demonstrate advanced information literacy skills by selecting, evaluating, integrating and documenting information gathered from multiple sources into discipline-specific writing.

4. Communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, the results of the project or experience.

**Course Requirements**

This course is an advanced independent research project carried out under guidance of a faculty member. Thesis students and their advisors will agree upon a work plan that includes: the research plan; regular face-to-face meetings; regular written or oral communication between advisee and adviser; a schedule for submission of written work (including outlines or notes, drafts, and the final version). The advisor is responsible for ensuring that the student obtains IRB approval if appropriate and is listed as the principal investigator on the IRB application..

The student will present the completed thesis to a committee of two or more faculty members (including the primary adviser and at least one other faculty member). Typically students will take two semesters to complete a senior thesis (SOC 492 and SOC 493).

**Assignments**

Preliminary proposal

Revised proposal

Research plan

IRB proposal

Draft

Senior thesis (35-50 page paper or alternative format)

Oral defense of thesis

**Additional assignments (vary from instructor to instructor)**

Outlines

Reading notes

**EXAMPLES OF READINGS**

Atwood, Margaret. *Alias, Grace.* Anchor Books: 1997.

Bohannan, Paul. “The Impact of Money on an African Subsistence Economy.”  In *Anthropology for the Nineties*. Ed. J. B. Cole, NY: The Free Press, 1988.

Geary, Patrick. “Sacred Commodities: The Circulation of Medieval Relics.” In *The Social Life of Things.*Cambridge University Press, 1986.

Harris, T. *The Silence of the Lambs.* St. Martins Press, 1991.

Horton, James O. and Lois E. Horton (Eds.) *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory*. University of North Caroline Press, 2008.

Hosley, Bayo, *Routes of Remembrance: Refashioning the Slave Trade in Ghana.* University of Chicago Press, 2008.

Lessing, Doris. *The Fifth Child*. New York: Vintage Books, 1989.

Lievrouw, Leah, *Alternative and Activist New Media*. New York: Polity Press, 2011.

Marx, Karl. *Capital.* Translation by Albert Dragstedt of the first chapter of the first German edition of *Capital*.Section 1, “The Two Factors of a Commodity: Use-Value and Value (the substance of value and the magnitude of value)

Perlstein, Rick. *Nixonland: The President and The Fracturing of America*. New York:Scribner. 2009.

Sachar, L. *Holes.*

Sahlins, Marshall. “The Original Affluent Society.” In *Anthropology for the Nineties*. Ed. J. B. Cole, NY: The Free Press, 1988.

Schrift, Alan D. “Introduction: Why Gift?” In *The Logic of the Gift.*Ed. Alan D. Schrift. Routledge 1997.

Jean Twenge *Generation Me: Why Today's Young Americans Are More Confident, Assertive, Entitled--and More Miserable Than Ever Before*. Atria Books, 2007.

Weiner, Annette B. *The Trobrianders of Papua New Guinea.* Holt Reinhart Winston Inc., 1987. “Introduction: A Sacred Place” and “Men Working for Women”

.

Wright, Richard. *Native Son.* New York: Harper Perennial, 2005.

Shriver, L. *We Need to Talk About Kevin*.

**Scholarly articles and other materials**

Alderman, Derek and E. Arnold Modlin, Jr, “(In)visibility of the enslaved within online plantation tourism marketing: A textual analysis of North Carolina websites”

Budka, Philip, “From Cyber to Digital Anthropology to an Anthropology of the Contemporary?” EASA Media Anthropology Network working paper, n.d.

Ginsburg, Faye, “Rethinking the Digital Age” (EASA Media Anthropology Network working paper, n.d.

Giovanetti, Jorge L, “Subverting the Master’s narrative: Public histories of slavery in plantation America” *International Labor and Working Class History* Volume 76 / Issue 01 / Fall 2009 pp 105-126

Mazzarella W. (2010) Beautiful balloon: the digital divide and the charisma of new media in India. *American Ethnologist* 37(4): 783-804.

Spitulnik, Deborah, “Anthropology and Mass Media”, *Annual Review of Anthropology* 22: 293-315.

Amy M. Tyson, “Crafting emotional comfort: interpreting the painful past at living history museums in the new economy” *museum and society*, Nov. 2008. 6(3) 246-262

**SAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS**

**Reading summaries**

Students will submit period summaries of the material they are reading for their thesis. This will be preparation for a literature review, which will be part of the thesis. Students can either write summaries of individual articles or books, or they can write summaries of several sources on a related theme. Students should summarize the main points, and also provide your own analysis of the readings: simply agreeing or disagreeing with the authors is not analysis. Summaries should include why this source will be useful for the thesis. All summaries must be well written, in complete sentences and paragraphs. You must use one of the standard citation formats (MLA, APA or Chicago) to cite the readings.

***Learning outcomes***

* Demonstrate ability to critically interpret theoretical arguments and social science research in writing.
* Demonstrate familiarity with one of the accepted methods of citation.

**Preliminary proposal**

A preliminary proposal is the first step in defining your thesis project. It is a plan for your research and writing. Proposal writing is not busy work! Proposal writing is not easy because you have not done all of the work yet. It is a balancing act because you have to do a certain amount of work to figure out what it is that you are going to work on. Once you think you know enough, you write a proposal seeking approval for what you propose to do. In this proposal you must persuade your reader that you have the basic understanding, research competence, background knowledge, and technical skills to complete the proposed project successfully.

For a preliminary proposal you must do the following:

* *State the overall theme or topic within which your research/paper is located*.
* *Narrow the topic into a specific and focused research question*.
* *Why are you interested in this topic? What do you hope to learn from it?*
* *How does this topic reflect your studies in Sociology/Anthropology, and your other coursework at UMD?*
* *What sub-topics will you research to answer the question?*
* *What methodology(ies) will you use?*
* *Where will you find your sources (sites for original research, primary sources, secondary sources)?*

***Learning outcomes:***

* Formulate a research topic appropriate to the subject matter of the course.
* Design and carry out an original, independent research project with a solid theoretical foundation appropriate to the subject matter, which integrates knowledge and skills gained in their major courses, and utilizing an effective research strategy.

**ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Locating and critically assessing written sources is a critical part of a research project. You need to be able to search effectively, understand the difference between popular and scholarly sources, understand and know how to locate peer-reviewed and scholarly journal articles, and how to evaluate Internet sources.

An annotated bibliography is a tool for critically evaluating sources on a particular subject. It helps you learn about a topic and formulate your ideas, to prepare you for further research on a topic. By writing an annotated bibliography, you demonstrate your mastery of a topic and your familiarity with the social science literature on that topic. It helps you assess and evaluate your sources. It includes the full citation information for the source, and then a substantial paragraph or two that provide an evaluative summary of the source.

To write your **evaluative summary**, you need to (1) summarize some of the main arguments or contributions of the article or book. Then, you need to (2) analyze and evaluate the utility of the source.

Your annotated bibliography should meet the following guidelines:

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* No dictionaries, encyclopedias, generic websites like Yahoo.com or Wikipedia.
* If your research includes examining online sources (blogs, websites, Twitter feeds, Facebook groups) as part of your evidence/data, then include those. You will need to include a brief description along with the citation.
* You must demonstrate that you have read more than the abstract of the article or the back-cover blurb for the book.

***Learning outcomes:***

* Demonstrate advanced information literacy skills by selecting, evaluating, integrating and documenting information gathered from multiple sources into discipline-specific writing.
* Demonstrate familiarity with one of the accepted methods of citation

**Thesis**

**Overview**

A senior thesis must address a significant question and demonstrate that its author can interpret findings and formulate conclusions that are the result of original thinking and sustained evaluation of source materials. It must present a defensible hypothesis or a clearly defined argument. The findings must be expressed in clear and grammatical language that is well organized into cogent and coherent arguments The research paper or poster must be a comprehensive, complete and ORIGINAL scholarly work

The paper or poster can be based on secondary (library and archival) or primary (first-hand ethnographic observation and interviews) research, or a combination. In either case, your thesis should be analytical and not just descriptive.  That is, the phenomenon or issue you have researched should be situated in a socio-historical context.  Your thesis should make use of discipline-specific concepts, theories, frameworks or methods, and should address some of the key themes, theories and issues we have covered in this class.

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The project will include the following steps:

*Preliminary proposal.* Ideally this should be submitted at the end of the semester prior to beginning thesis research.

*Expanded proposal*: This needs to be 2-3 full pages in length.  You should have a clearly defined research question and a preliminary bibliography

*Research plan*: This should be submitted at the beginning of the first semester of thesis research.

*Annotated preliminary bibliography*: You need to make sure that there are sufficient sources for you to conduct the research, so you need to prepare a preliminary bibliography.

*IRB proposal* (if conducting ethnographic research)

*Conducting research.* Generally this will take place over several months with periodic written and oral reports presented to thesis advisor.

*Outline*

*Draft chapters or sections*. Thesis advisors may ask students to draft chapters or sections of the thesis and submit to the advisor for review, or an advisor may ask for

*Draft* You need to submit a complete draft of your paper.

*Final paper or poster*. Must follow formatting and citation guidelines.

*Thesis defense*. The thesis advisor will convene a session of the thesis committee and the student will give a formal oral presentation summarizing the main argument, with questions and comments by the thesis committee.

*Presentation in a community or scholarly context*.

Thesis advisors will work with students to develop an outline that is appropriate to the topic and to the methodology(ies) used. In general, a senior thesis should include the following components:

* Abstract
* Introduction
* Literature review
* Methodology
* Presentation of data
* Discussion/analysis
* Conclusion
* Questions for further research
* Works cited

*Learning Outcomes*:

* Synthesize the knowledge and skills gained within major courses, independently complete a research-based project or creative work and integrate the results of both in an open-ended project or experience (projects within the major are encouraged).
* Demonstrate advanced information literacy skills by selecting, evaluating, integrating and documenting information gathered from multiple sources into discipline-specific writing.
* Communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, the results of the project or experience.

**Course outline:**

**The Process**

The student will identify and work closely with a primary faculty advisor who will be responsible for supervising the thesis work and assigning a final grade. To assure continuity, the advisor must be a full-time tenure-track or tenured member of the Department. The student is encouraged to consult with other faculty with expertise in relevant fields, especially if the project is interdisciplinary in nature. The thesis topic, research design, IRB approval process, data collection, and analysis and writing will all be closely supervised by the faculty advisor. Communication between student and faculty advisor must be mutually agreed upon and be sufficient to provide adequate support to the student.

The plan for completing the thesis should be agreed upon by the student and faculty advisor. The process should include the following steps:

* **Declaration of interest and identification of faculty advisor**: Prior to developing a proposal, the student will meet with a faculty member and declare his or her interest in thesis work. This will generally take place prior to the semester in which thesis work will begin. The initial conversation can take place between the student and his or her academic advisor or any other faculty member, and should result in identification of a general topic and a faculty advisor.

* **Submission of a preliminary thesis proposal.** This should be submitted to and approved of by the faculty advisor no later than the first week of the first semester of thesis work.

* **Registration for Thesis Credit.** The semester that thesis work is to begin, or during the registration period of the prior semester, the faculty advisor contacts the Registrar to get the student registered for thesis credits (SOC/ANT 492/493 are not regularly listed on COIN). The student is responsible for organizing the submission of any Independent Study credits. This can be done after the regular drop/add period.
* **Getting IRB approval for any primary data collection.** This MUST be acquired before the actual collection of the data. The faculty advisor is the principal investigator on record and is responsible for making sure this process is followed.
* **Submission of a more detailed research plan and detailed timetable for completion**. This should be submitted to and approved of by the faculty advisor no later than mid-semester of the first semester of thesis work.
* **Regular communication with faculty advisor**. This includes progress reports, face-to-face meetings along the way, and submission of iterative steps according to guidelines and deadlines laid out by the faculty advisor.
* **Presentation of the project to an agreed upon thesis committee and if appropriate, at relevant public venues.**

Successful thesis writers will be recognized at the annual departmental honors ceremony and will be invited to present a brief synopsis of their theses.

The thesis usually takes two semesters to complete. While each thesis project is unique, generally the first semester is spent doing literature review and beginning data collection. The second semester often includes additional data collection, but is primarily devoted to writing.