

HSPV 710/THESIS I

Prof. Frank G. Matero / Thursday 8:30-11:30/Van Pelt - Lippincott Library Seminar Room 242

Office: 117 Meyerson Hall / Tel. 215.898.3169

Email: fgmatero@design.upenn.edu

Office hours: Tuesday/12:00-2:00 (sign up <https://fgmatero-7.youcanbook.me>)

TA:

“Avoid narrative plod, purge inert data, go for the core, make the case stand for something.”

Emerson on writing, quoted in *NYT Book Review*, August 10, 2003, p.15.

General Description

Thesis is a two semester, 2 CU capstone course required to complete the Master of Science in Historic Preservation. The goal of the thesis is demonstrated mastery of the research process by exploring a question of academic/professional relevance to the preservation field and presenting the results of the study in accordance with the highest standards of scholarly publishing. The thesis spans the academic year, beginning with HSPV 710/Thesis I in the fall semester and continues in the spring with HSPV 711/Thesis II. Students are required to successfully complete 9-10 CUs (the first year of the curriculum) to qualify for Thesis in their second year. Permission to enroll in Thesis I requires the submittal of a ‘Thesis Statement of Interest’ describing one or more potential research topics during the summer and before the start of the second year. Dual degree students are expected to enroll in HSPV 710 before undertaking thesis studio in their respective dual program in their final year.

Rationale

A thesis is a proposition laid down or stated (“I propose to...”) and explored through research involving data collection, reading, writing, analysis, experimentation, and graphic and visual representation. The thesis is intended as a demonstration of competency in undertaking an independent research project in the field, and specifically in a students’ chosen area or concentration.

Thesis subjects should relate to an individual’s interest and preparedness through the core and elective courses. Students should consult the departmental thesis abstracts (<https://www.design.upenn.edu/historic-preservation/work/thesis>) and Penn Libraries Scholarly Commons web site (<http://repository.upenn.edu>) to review past thesis topics. Thesis advisors are assigned by the faculty according to the thesis subject and fit of expertise, usually in the beginning of the fall semester.

Only through meaningful research can students achieve the sense of mastery that accompanies a mature engagement with the kinds of questions that are embedded in scholarly activity. The

term 'research' will have different meanings within the preservation field. Certain common factors define the graduate research experience:

- Employing the methodology of a discipline: In the research process, graduate students learn to employ the basic tools of one or more disciplines or epistemological traditions—i.e., history, architecture, the social sciences, the physical sciences.
- Handling primary materials or raw data: At the heart of the research experience is the student's grappling with the "stuff" of scholarship or the creative act. This could involve conducting an experiment, examining primary and secondary sources, conducting interviews, documenting case studies or working with a medium of artistic expression.
- Learning from a mentor: The graduate research experience is informed by consultation with an advisor from the faculty, while responsibility of the production of the research lies with the student.
- Confronting a problem or question of interest to practitioners in the field: While the activities of the graduate research experience vary depending on the subject of study and a student's goals, they should be shaped by the framing of a question or problem in terms of the preservation field's current state of knowledge. Theses are most satisfying when they break new ground.
- Documenting the process and the results of one's work: From the initial statement of an argument based on the thesis proposition ("I propose to...)," through formulation of a methodology (how), data collection and analysis (what), clear communication of the work is key. Documentation normally takes the form of a scholarly paper or design proposal defining the problem, elaborating on methodology, data sources (carefully cited), analyses performed and reported/visualized, and drawing conclusions and recommendations.

GENERAL TIMELINE OF THE THESIS PROCESS

The essential timeline of Thesis activities is as follows (see specific dates on attached Schedule for Thesis I):

End of Spring term, first year: Group introduction of Thesis process; Booth's *Craft of Research* assigned as summer reference reading.

Summer: Explore ideas informally and possibly related to internship; read widely in your area(s) of interest; possibly collect data. Submit **Thesis Statement of Interest** to the department chair and your advisor.

Fall term of second year: HSPV 710/Thesis I

- **Thesis Research Topic**, plus a one-page bibliography of examined sources due mid September
- A series of ‘workshops’ organized around the gross methodological categories and scientific/humanistic topics:
 - Overview of research process; discerning research questions from topics by concentration;
 - Formulating and refining the **Thesis Research Proposal**
 - Constructing a **Literature Review**; scheduling/testing/detailing the outline
- Advisors assigned: early October; one-on-one meetings between student and advisor must be scheduled to refine the **Thesis Research Proposal** and in December to review work completed, status of **Literature Review**, and plan for spring
- Final **Thesis Research Proposal and Draft Literature Review with Presentation** due: early December

Spring term of second year: HSPV 711/Thesis II

- **Thesis Presentations**: two days in January at start of semester
- Individual advisor meetings: should be scheduled approximately every other week
- Mandatory concentration meetings in the alternative weeks for trouble-shooting and mutual support and workshops on identified topics including writing
- **Full Thesis Draft** due to advisors for review and comment: early April (this is a hard deadline). While advisors are reading, the student should start finalizing images, captions, tables and bibliography. We expect that you will submit one or more revised versions to your advisor in advance of the May final submission deadline
- Meeting in early April with all students regarding formatting and submission (led by appropriate staff member)
- **Final Thesis** document due to HSPV office in early May: content should be approved by advisor; format of this draft will be reviewed by HSPV office; this submission is digital format (pdf)
- **Final formatted Thesis** document due early May: this final document incorporates changes from formatting review by HSPV office
- **Final presentations** (1-minute talks) and **Thesis submittal for End of Year Show**: May

Requirements

Attendance: Enrolled (non-audit) students are required to attend all Thesis Workshop sessions. Please note the dates. Of course, I understand that sometimes emergencies or other unexpected circumstances arise that make attendance that day impossible. If this is the case, please talk with me as soon as possible so we can make arrangements to get you caught up. If you will be absent from a class for a university-sponsored activity, please make arrangements with me beforehand regarding any work you might miss.

Readings: Required readings are posted on the workshop schedule. I strongly recommend you purchase Booth and Leedy as you will want to refer to this text throughout the year. That said, I will place a pdf of the required readings in the course folder.

Grades: HSPV710/Thesis I is a required course. As the thesis represents the culmination of your academic efforts, I assume you will do the work to the best of your ability. There will be two grades only: A for all work completed and submitted on time including the final presentation and F for work not completed and submitted on time. Scheduled class attendance is required. Successful completion of HSPV 710 is required to register for HSPV 711 in the spring semester. Both are required to graduate.

Learning Environment

Academic honesty is fundamental to our scholarly community. The *Penn Student Handbook* (<https://www.design.upenn.edu/student-handbooks>) contains the University Code of Academic Integrity, to which the School of Design strictly adheres. A confirmed violation of that Code in this course will result in a failing grade, and likely in other disciplinary measures. The UPenn Code of Academic Integrity is available online at: <https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/code-of-academic-integrity/>

#AskMe

In order to insure a positive, open and respectful learning environment, I invite you all to email me as to how you indentify: preferred name to use in class, preferred pronouns, anything that will allow you and me to create the best classroom environment.

Students with disabilities

The University of Pennsylvania provides reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities who have self-identified and been approved by the office of Student Disabilities Services (SDS). Please make an appointment to meet with me as soon as possible in order to discuss your accommodations and your needs. If you have not yet contacted SDS, and would like to request accommodations or have questions, you can make an appointment by calling SDS 215.573.9235. The office is located in the Weingarten Learning Resources Center/Stouffer Commons 3702 Spruce St- Suite 300.

Laptops/tablets/mobile phones

It is understand that laptop computers will be used only for taking lecture notes or for activities directly related to in-class exercises, not for homework or non-academic purposes. Rogue activities are distracting, disruptive, and disrespectful to our collective objectives to learn through classroom participation. In-class computer use is a privilege that may be suspended at the instructor's discretion if the above guidelines are violated. All mobile phones are to be turned off and placed out of sight during class.

Readings

Required:

Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams 2016. *The Craft of Research*. 3rd ed. The University of Chicago Press.

“From Topics to Questions” and “From Questions to a Problem,” 31-67

“Making A Claim and Supporting It,” 105-151

“Planning,” 177-186.

Creswell, John W. 2014. *Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 4th ed. Sage Pub. “Review of the Literature,” 27-48.

Leedy, Paul D. and Jeanne Ellis Ormrod. 2013. *Practical Research: Planning and Design*. 10th ed. Pearson. NB: any recent edition may be substituted as chapters are same/similar

“The Problem: The Heart of the Research Process,” 43-63.

“Review of the Related Literature,” 64-85

Recommended:

Eco, Umberto. 2015. *How to Write a Thesis*. MIT Press.

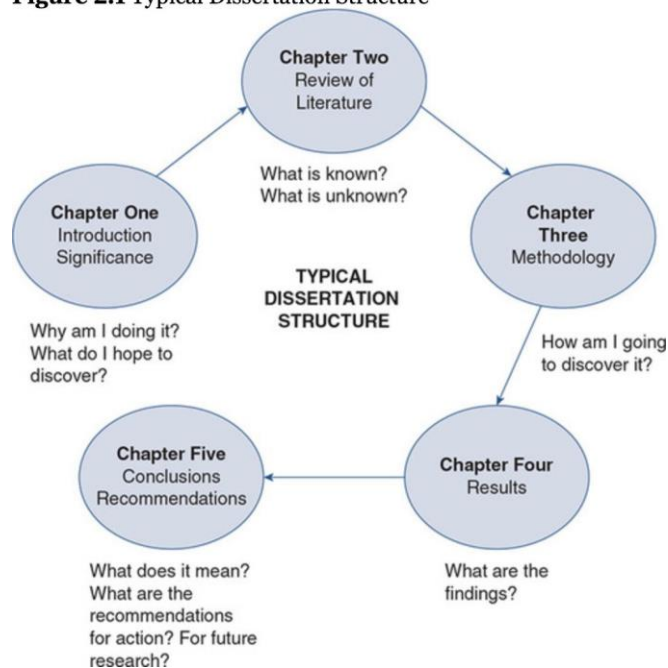
William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White, *Elements of Style*, Fourth Edition (New York: Pearson: 2019).

William Zinsser, *On Writing Well*, 30th Anniversary Edition. New York: Harper’s 2016.

John R. Hall. *Cultures of Inquiry: From Epistemology to Discourse in Sociohistorical Research* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999)

Henry H. Bauer, “*Scientific Literacy and the Myth of Scientific Methods*,” in *The So-Called Scientific Method* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992)

Figure 2.1 Typical Dissertation Structure



Sept 2 Overview of the Thesis Process-Entire class/entire period

Due: 1 page 'Statement of Interest' and 1 page 'Bibliography' in any accepted standard format-due for class and revised and uploaded by 9:00AM/Sept 9. This is an informal description of what topics/questions you would like to research and what questions you would like to answer. This usually is in the following form:

I would like to research (X) because (Y) in order to (Z).

For class discussion:

- What is a thesis; the nature of research
- Discerning research questions from topics

Sept 9 (Group 1) The Research Process-Class divided into two sections-see schedule

Sept 16 (Group 2) The Research Process-Class divided into two sections-see schedule

Read: Booth, 31-67; Leedy and Ormond, 43-63

Thesis review: After reviewing several HSPV theses, https://repository.upenn.edu/hp_theses/ select one thesis in your field of interest. Write up and present a 2-3 page description that assesses the following questions:

- The title: Does it give an unambiguous indication of the nature of the thesis? Are keywords evident in the title?
- The abstract: Does it provide a clear summary of the thesis? Are keywords contained? What are they?
- Locate and examine the aims of the thesis: Are they precise and clearly worded?
- Examine the contents pages and overall structure of the thesis: Is it easy to find your way around? Why?
- What kind of research is the author conducting?
- Identify the problem statement
- How does the author arrive at the problem statement: Is the writing logical? Do they use a "narrative hook" to engage the reader or is the whole thing tedious and wordy?
 - Do they start with a general overview of the area under study and progressively narrow the narrative to express the problem?
 - Do they present the problem first and then provide the background?
 - Do they review what is known and what is not known about the problem?
 - Do they state the purpose and significance of the study?
 - Do they provide clearly stated research question(s)?

Sept 23 (Group 1) Refining the Research Statement-Class divided into two sections-see schedule

Sept 30 (Group 2) Refining the Research Statement-Class divided into two sections-see schedule (Kecia Fong will lead the session)

Read: Booth, 105-151 and 177-186; Creswell, 27-48.

Thesis Research Problem: Using Leedy and Ormand's Research Problem format (problem, subproblems, limits, definitions, etc.), rewrite your Thesis Statement of Interest as a Thesis Research Problem. Invite a class member outside your thesis group to provide written feedback (see sample example in Leedy and Ormond). All reviews should include the following:

- Is the problem stated in a clear progression stating what (x), because (y) and why (z)?
- Is it clear how the area of study will be broken out into subproblems, are assumptions and limits included?
- Does the problem stated have the potential for providing important, relevant answers and information?
- Will the result be more than gathering information?
- Is the problem focused enough to be 'doable' or is it too broad?

Oct 7 (Group 1) Constructing a Literature Review-Class divided into two sections-see schedule

Oct 14 (Group 2) Constructing a Literature Review-Class divided into two sections-see schedule

Read: Booth, 68-103; Leedy and Ormond, 64-84

Thesis or published Literature Review:

Using the same or different thesis from the Sept 10/17 assignment or a published literature review related to your thesis topic, evaluate the review addressing the following:

- What is the organizational framework of the literature review (chronological, thematic, general to specific) and what is the author's argument as seen in this organization?
 - How is each section organized? Is there a short general introduction and summary in each section?
 - How do the sections relate to the problem statement?
- Is each one a critical assessment and synergistic overview of the literature related to the research problem?
 - Do they point out landmark studies?
 - Do they show how ideas etc. have changed over time?
 - Do they show which literature provides the foundation for the thesis?
 - Do they demonstrate and explain the commonalities and contrasts of theories, ideas, and/or concepts related to the problem?
 - Do they assess the data/evidence used to make their particular arguments?
 - Do they point out gaps in the literature?
- Does the lit review demonstrate the author's mastery of the subject and positioning of the problem within it?

Oct 21/28 (Groups will be announced)

Analysis of Research Design/Execution-full class period-each session will be led by a different faculty advisor as per disciplinary methodology-see schedule

Select a monograph or peer-reviewed journal article in your area of study (or one assigned by guest faculty) and analyze the following the questions below:

- Does the research design relate to the aims of the study? That is, will it generate the knowledge that addresses the purpose or aims of the study?
 - Does it include a conceptual or theoretical framework?
 - Did the author(s) do any pilot studies to test their approaches?
- How well do the author(s) describe their research designs? Are they logical and clearly written so that you the reader concludes that the selected approach is credible?
- What instruments or methods of conducting data collection are described? If a quantitative study, do they discuss: sampling procedure, the type of survey and data collection instrument, and the response rates? If a qualitative study, do they explain what techniques are used e.g. interviews, participant observations, primary and secondary source examination?
- Other issues:
 - Are there any ethical issues covered?
 - Did the author(s) discuss the strengths and limitations of their chosen methodologies?

Presentation of Findings

- What arguments (claims, reasons, and evidence) do the author(s) make with their findings?
 - Do the author(s) present the arguments/findings clearly, backed with evidence? Do they provide strong arguments i.e. evidence-backed findings?
 - Do they use a variety of methods (charts, tables, photographs) effectively? Are the various forms employed easy to understand? Do they stand on their own? Do the author(s) include them in the narrative effectively?
 - How do the arguments/findings fit the structure of the dissertation?
 - Are they relevant to the aims/purposes of the study?
 - How do they relate to the literature review – do they fill gap(s)? Do they replicate other studies/confirm earlier theories or hypothesis? Do they break new ground?
 - Do they offer new knowledge or deeper validation of a particular theory or concept? Are the arguments significant (meaning important, beyond the “so what” stage)?

Nov 4 Draft Thesis Proposal and Literature Review due 5:00 PM

Nov 11 Thesis Presentations-10 minute illustrated presentation-all expected to attend

Nov 18 Thesis Presentations-10 minute illustrated presentation-all expected to attend

Dec 17 Final Proposal and Literature Review due

07/02/21