

Liberal Arts College
LBCL 496/3 A - Honors Seminar: Thesis
Fall/Winter 2024 - 2025

Tues/Thurs. 14:45-16:00

Professor Mark Russell

RR 304

Office hours: TBA

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will help you plan and write a successful Honours thesis. It will help you research, organize, and write a scholarly essay with techniques that provide a foundation for all research and writing. You will learn how to familiarize yourself with the literature in your area of interest; develop a focused thesis topic; take useful notes; and plan and organize an essay through prewriting. By the end of the fall semester you will have a bibliography, focus statement, and a short draft/detailed plan of your thesis. The winter semester will be devoted to research and writing; class time will focus on honing your critical skills, and developing your own essay, through reading and commenting on each other's work. Once you have a more complete first draft, we will work on revision at the levels of structure and content. You will then read and polish second drafts. By the end of the course, you will have produced a well-researched, clearly expressed 30-40-page Honours thesis.

REQUIREMENTS

- Attendance is mandatory. It is your responsibility to notify me of anticipated absences and, if appropriate, provide medical notes to document them.
- Pay attention to deadlines and develop a work schedule early on. The focus of the class is on individual research and writing, thus much of the work will take place outside the classroom. It is up to you to ensure you are making progress and meet all assigned deadlines. If you run into difficulties and/or fall behind, please contact me and your thesis director at once: the sooner we become

aware of problems, the better we will be able to help you. Extensions will only be granted for medical reasons.

- Meet with your thesis director regularly to discuss your work in progress.
- Respond to each other's work thoroughly and responsibly.
- In accordance with University policy, plagiarism will result in a failing grade.

ASSIGNMENTS, DEADLINES, AND EVALUATION

- Seminar presentation - **10%**
- Focus statement and annotated bibliography (due 5 Nov.) - **5%**
- Responses to peers' work and class participation - **15%**
- Short section of thesis (10 pages) and outline (due 28 Nov.) - **10%**
- First draft (due 4 Feb.) - **10%**
- Second draft (due 11 March) - **10%**
- Thesis (due 10 April) - **40%**

SEMINAR PRESENTATION

You will choose a short article or chapter of a book relevant to your thesis, present a critical reading of it, and outline its relevance to your developing project. **You must make your selection available to your classmates and me at least a week before the presentation; all students are required to read it before the class.**

THESIS

The final version (maximum 40 pages of text) is to be submitted both to the instructor and to your thesis director. The thesis director **grades your thesis**, while the course instructor evaluates your overall work and **assigns the final course grade**.

FALL SEMESTER SCHEDULE (PROVISIONAL)

The schedule will change in accordance with the participants' number and needs. A revised schedule will be provided in the first weeks of class.

Week 1 (3-5 Sept)

Introduction. What is an LAC Honours thesis? Choosing a topic.

Week (10-12 Sept)

Research methods and strategies. Strategies for reading, evaluating relevant literature, and creating an annotated bibliography. Building a literature review.

Week 3 (17-19 Sept)

Constructing a strong argument. Types of evidence. Using evidence to support your argument. Preparing a focus statement. Developing a regular writing routine.

Week 4 (24-26 Sept)

How to revise and edit. Peer review: giving, receiving, and using feedback.

Week 5 (1-3 Oct)

Seminar Presentations.

Week 6 (8-10 Oct)

Seminar Presentations.

Week 7 (15-17 Oct) - MID-TERM BREAK - NO CLASS

Week 8 (22-24 Oct)

Seminar Presentations.

Week 9 (29-31 Oct)

Seminar Presentations.

Week 10 (5-7 Nov)

Focus statements and bibliographies due. Be sure to give copies to your thesis director and your classmates.

Week 11 (12-14 Nov)

Focus Statements.

Week 12 (19-21 Nov)

Focus Statements.

Week 13 (26-28 Nov)

Short section of thesis and outline due! (Be sure to give copies to your thesis director and your classmates!) Focus Statements.

WINTER SEMESTER SCHEDULE (PROVISIONAL)

Week 1 (14-16 Jan)

Section workshop.

Week 2 (21-23 Jan)

Section workshop.

Week 3 (28-30 Jan)

Section workshop.

Week 4 (4-6 Feb)

First draft due! Be sure to give copies to your thesis director and your classmates.
Section workshop.

Week 5 (11-13 Feb)

Draft workshop.

Week 6 (18-20 Feb)

Draft workshop.

Week 7 (25-27 Feb) - MID-TERM BREAK - NO CLASS

Week 8 (4-6 March)

Draft workshop.

Week 9 (11-13 March)

Second draft due! Be sure to give copies to your thesis director and your classmates.
Draft workshop.

Week 10 (18-20 March)

Draft workshop.

Week 11 (25-27 March)

Draft workshop.

Week 12 (1-3 April)

Draft workshop.

Week 13 (8-10 April)

Honours thesis due! The final version of the Honours thesis (maximum 40 pages of text) must be delivered to your thesis director and me by Thursday, 10 April for evaluation and final seminar grade submission. No extensions will be granted. Thesis directors assign the thesis a final grade and notify me of it. I will evaluate your overall work and assign a final course grade.