

COURSE OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

An increasing trend in thesis-based graduate programs is the inclusion of research seminars that foster a strong research culture and provide a foundation for the development of a high quality thesis. The research seminars provide a forum for discussion and evaluation of independent research, hands-on learning, as well as assists the students in the development of their ideas in a more efficient manner. A typical class format includes directed reading, review of research papers pertinent to the thesis topic of each student, development and presentation of thesis chapters and conference papers. This enables fresh and current ideas “hot off the press” to be discussed as well as streamlines the process of thesis development. This method of learning is ideal for graduate courses dealing with current research trends, and also with all research matters addressed in Environmental Design. The course is specifically designed to lead to a successful completion of a strong thesis.

OBJECTIVES

The research seminar is demand-driven and responds to the specific needs of students in terms of content and pedagogy. It has the following objectives:

1. To facilitate the development of a high quality thesis through well directed independent research;
2. To provide an effective feedback on thesis-based research through a forum for discussion and peer evaluation;
3. To foster a strong research culture as well as to contribute to the development of essential research skills.

COURSE CONTENT AND APPROACH

The research seminar acknowledges the value of peer-reviewed research contributions in shaping and advancing the knowledge in the interdisciplinary field of environmental design. Students, depending on their thesis topic, select research publications from international journals, books, conference proceedings, master and PhD theses communicating recent advances in their specific fields. A review of the literature will be presented to the class and discussed to facilitate proactive learning. The class will select research areas most relevant to the students, which will be explored through lectures, student presentations and/or critical review of theses. Students can also present, discuss and address with the class a methodological line-of-attack for their own thesis.

The course requires participants to attend class and/or to contribute to critical discussion of student research papers/chapters of their thesis. Students also conduct individual literature review, under direction from the instructor. Class meets weekly, at which time a student will present chapters of their thesis, a conference paper related to their thesis research or the results of a literature review pertaining to recent theories in their selected field of inquiry. Students are also encouraged to present, discuss and address with the class a methodological problem of interest, focusing on the logistics aspects. The latter format allows student to share with the class their thesis' ideas and receive constructive feedback. The presentation will be followed by a group discussion in which all in attendance are expected to participate.

The aim is always to prompt discussion and feedback, with the instructor and the presenting student serving as the moderators.

In addition of the scheduled seminar sessions, the instructors will be available for individual consultations with students to assist them with development of research papers (see 'Means of Evaluation' below) and seminar presentations for the course. In addition, the students are allowed to consult with the instructors while choosing 2-3 scholarly readings to share with the class (see below).

LOGISTICS FOR PRESENTATIONS

Length: 30 minutes of presentation, followed by 30 minutes of discussion directly related to presentation material with the attendees. Short Break. Approx. 2-hour discussion directed by presenter and by lead instructor. Visual material will be used to aid in the discussion. Relevant papers will be searched on the web. The blackboard will be used too with the ultimate goal to address methodological problems posed by the presenter of the day.

Elements to be included in presentation:

- A descriptive title, the author's name, address, and email address.
- Background Section: This should briefly summarize the background literature review a student has done.
- A synthesis that describes the approach a student wants to take, the take that she/he wants to give to the topic and/or the hypotheses that she/he wants to test.
- In general, a student wants to set the stage for an interesting intellectual contribution. She/he also wants to describe the broad implications of a topic to environmental design matters.

No later than 3 days after each presentation, the presenter will distribute to the class a pdf of the presentation. All students will send to the group feedback on the presentation and on 'tips' to strengthen the research approach. Feedback will be provided digitally and/or through scanning notes taken during the presentation and its discussion, and/or elaborated later.

The pdf of the presentation will also serve as 'basic structure' for a research paper to be handed to the instructor. In alternative, a student could submit a thesis chapter that should demonstrate incorporation of the inputs received by the instructor and the other students.

MEANS OF EVALUATION

1.	Individual presentations	25%
2.	Individual participation in group discussions	20%
3.	Quality of material shared with the group (including, but not limited to journal publications and copy of student presentation)	25%
3.	Research paper/thesis chapter	30%

Continuing (not 1st year) students registered in the course are encouraged to have an approved research proposal and a supervisor.

Notes:

1. Written work and other course related work may only be submitted by e-mail if prior permission to do so has been obtained from the course instructor.

2. It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodation and have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 220-8237. (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/drc/node/46>) Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. You are also required to discuss your needs with your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the start of this course.

3. Plagiarism – Plagiarism involves submitting or presenting work in a course as if it were the student's own work done expressly for that particular course when, in fact, it is not. Most commonly plagiarism exists when: (a) the work submitted or presented was done, in whole or in part, by an individual other than the one submitting or presenting the work (this includes

having another impersonate the student or otherwise substituting the work of another for one's own in an examination or test), (b) parts of the work are taken from another source without reference to the original author, (c) the whole work (e.g., an essay) is copied from another source, and/or, (d) a student submits or presents work in one course which has also been submitted in another course (although it may be completely original with that student) without the knowledge of or prior agreement of the instructor involved. While it is recognized that scholarly work often involves reference to the ideas, data and conclusions of other scholars, intellectual honesty requires that such references be explicitly and clearly noted. Plagiarism is an extremely serious academic offence. It is recognized that clause (d) does not prevent a graduate student incorporating work previously done by him or her in a thesis. Any suspicion of plagiarism will be reported to the Dean, and dealt with as per the regulations in the University of Calgary Graduate Calendar.

4. Information regarding the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>) and how this impacts the receipt and delivery of course material

5. Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>)

6. Safewalk information (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/safewalk>)

7. Contact Info for: Student Union (<http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/page/affordability-accessibility/su-structure/contact-info>); Graduate Student representative (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/gsa/>) and Student Ombudsman's Office (<http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/page/quality-education/academic-services/student-rights>).

8. Distribution of Grades

A+ 4.0 Outstanding

A 4.0 Excellent – superior performance showing comprehensive understanding of the subject matter

A- 3.7 Very good performance

B+ 3.3 Good performance

B 3.0 Satisfactory performance

Note: The grade point value (3.0) associated with this grade is the minimum acceptable average that a graduate student must maintain throughout the program as computed at the end of each registration anniversary year of the program.

B- 2.7 Minimum pass for students in the Faculty of Graduate Studies Note: A student who receives a B- or lower in two or more courses will be required to withdraw regardless of their grade point average unless the program recommends otherwise.

Individual programs may require a higher minimum passing grade.

C+ 2.3

All grades below B- are indicative of failure at the graduate level and cannot be counted toward Faculty of Graduate Studies course requirements. A student who receives a grade of F will normally be required to withdraw unless the program recommends otherwise.

C 2.0

C- 1.7

D+ 1.3

D 1.0

F 0.0