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| |  | | --- | | **COURSE SYLLABUS**  **Thesis Seminar for Humanities and Journalism**  **HSS 389 Fall 2020**  **Wednesday 14:45-17:30**  **Room: 2.05**  Lecturer: Dr. Karen Grunow-Hårsta, Ph.D.  Lecturer contact: karen.grunow@aauni.edu  Office hours: Wednesday 17:30 -18:30 and by appointment |        |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Credits US/ECTS** | 3/6 | **Level** | Advanced | | **Length** | 15 weeks | **Pre-requisite** | COM 102 | | **Contact hours** | 42 hours | **Course type** | Required/Elective | |

1. **Course Description**

HSS 389 introduces students to the purpose, structural elements and process of writing a Bachelor’s thesis in the Humanities and Social Sciences program. It takes students through the stages of thesis writing: determining a relevant research question, writing a focused thesis statement, supporting that thesis theoretically and methodologically, as well as revising and editing drafts in accordance with the conventions of academic writing. Students will also learn to critically evaluate and incorporate sources, to construct a sound argument as well as to use accurate citation format. The goal of the course is for students to acquire and develop the skills necessary to efficiently produce a Bachelors’ thesis of high academic quality.

1. **Student Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

* Determine a relevant and proper research question.
* Determine a relevant and proper thesis statement to answer that question.
* Determine the relevant theory and methodology to inform the thesis statement.
* Find and properly incorporate quality resources into their argument in support of the thesis statement.
* Produce an overall quality foundation for further research with their thesis.
* Engage in constructive small-group peer revision and editing.
* Critically read, write, and think.

1. **Course Materials**

Materials will be posted on NEO and/or available in the library.

Required texts: Browne, M. and S. Keeley. *Asking the Right Questions*. New York: Pearson, 2012.

Lester, J. *Writing Research Papers: A Complete Guide*. New York: Pearson. 2015.

1. **Teaching methodology**

The course is taught in a combination of short lectures, readings, individual research, class discussion, small group interaction and individual presentations, as well as incrementally written works culminating in the final project: The Thesis Proposal.

In order to accommodate both remote and on-campus students, lectures will be recorded. Remote students are encouraged to join the live streamed class. Part of class time will be dedicated to individual live and remote consultations.

1. **Course Schedule**

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| --- | --- |
|  | **Lecture Topics and Assignments** |
| **Lesson 1**  **Sept. 23** | **Topic: Introduction and Course Overview**  **Introductory discussion on Critical Thinking**  **Readings & Discussion:**  *Writing Research Papers: A Complete Guide*. Ch. 1\*  *Introduction to Academic Writing*  **\***All assigned readings must be completed before class, and students must be prepared to summarize and discuss the readings. Students should relate the readings to their own progress in writing their thesis |
| **Lesson 2**  **Sept. 30** | **Topic: Formulating Research Questions and the Thesis Statement**  **Readings & Discussion:**  *Writing Research Papers: A Complete Guide*. Ch. 2, 3. Do the “Your Research Project Student led Activities” at the end of each chapter; be prepared to discuss in class.  *Topic Selection*  *Organizing Ideas and Setting Goals*  *Asking the Right Questions* Ch. 1, 2. Be prepared to discuss in class.  *The Benefit of Asking the Right Questions*  *What Are the Issue and the Conclusion?* |
| **Lesson 3**  **Oct. 7** | **Topics: 1. Humanities and Journalism Research Thesis Guide: Components &**  **Structure**  **2. Topic: Finding, Evaluating & Documenting sources (note-taking, citations,**  **work-cited)**  **Readings & Discussion:**  *Writing Research Papers: A Complete Guide*. Ch. 4, 5. Do the “Your Research Project Activities” at the end of each chapter; be prepared to discuss in class.  *Finding Web-based resources*  *Using Library Resources*  *Asking the Right Questions* Ch. 3, 4. Be prepared to discuss in class.  *What Are the Reasons?*  *What Words or Phrases Are Ambiguous?*  *Crap Detection 101 (on Neo)*  First Assignment Due: Description of Topic Area & Proposed Research Question & Research Schedule |
| **Lesson 4**  **Friday**  **Oct. 9** | **Topic: Internal Structure of the Thesis, Abstract, Literature Review, Theoretical Framework and Methodology**  **Readings & Discussion:**  *Writing Research Papers: A Complete Guide*. Ch. 6, 7. Do the “Your Research Project Activities” at the end of chapter 7; be prepared to discuss in class.  *Conducting Field Research*  *Plagiarism and how to avoid it*  *Asking the Right Questions* Ch. 5, 6. Be prepared to discuss in class.  *What Are the Value Conflicts and Assumptions?*  *What Are the Descriptive Assumptions?* |
| **Lesson 5**  **Oct. 14** | **Topics: Incorporating Sources (paraphrase, summary and quotation),**  **Argumentation and Fallacies**  **Readings & Discussion:**  *Writing Research Papers: A Complete Guide*. Ch. 8. Do the “Your Research Project Activities” at the end of each chapter; be prepared to discuss in class.  *Reading and evaluating sources*  *Asking the Right Questions* Ch. 7, 8. Be prepared to discuss in class.  *Are There Any Fallacies in the Reasoning?*  *How Good Is the Evidence: Intuition, Personal Experience, Testimonials, and Appeals to Authority?*  Second Assignment Due: Working Thesis Statement & Proposed Bibliography |
| **Lesson 6**  **Oct. 21** | **Topic: Outlines**  **Readings & Discussion:**  *Writing Research Papers: A Complete Guide*. Ch. 9. Do the “Your Research Project Activities” at the end of each chapter; be prepared to discuss in class.  *Developing Outlines and Writing Effective Notes*  *Asking the Right Questions* Ch. 9, 10. Be prepared to discuss in class.  *How Good Is the Evidence: Personal Observation, Research Studies, Case Examples*  *and Analogies*  *Are There Rival Causes?* |
| **Oct. 28** | **State Holiday** |
| **Lesson 7**  **Nov 4.** | **Topic: Proposal Content & Structure**  **Readings & Discussion:**  *Writing Research Papers: A Complete Guide*. Ch. 10, 11. Do the “Your Research Project Activities” at the end of each chapter; be prepared to discuss in class.  *Drafting the Paper in an Academic Style*  *MLA Style In-text References*  *Asking the Right Questions* Ch. 11, 12. Be prepared to discuss in class.  *Are the Statistics Deceptive?*  *What Significant Information Is Omitted?*  Third Assignment Due: Revised Thesis Statement, Annotated Bibliography |
| **Lesson 8**  **Nov. 11** | **Topic: Audience, Academic Style & Conventions**  **First Peer Review: Thesis Outline**  **Readings & Discussion:**  *Writing Research Papers: A Complete Guide*. Ch. 12. Do the “Your Research Project Activities” at the end of each chapter; be prepared to discuss in class.  *Writing Introduction, Body and Conclusion*  *Asking the Right Questions* Ch. 13, 14. Be prepared to discuss in class.  *What Reasonable Conclusions Are Possible?* |
| **Lesson 9**  **Friday**  **Nov. 13** | **Independent Research Class & Individual Consultations**  **Readings**  *Writing Research Papers: A Complete Guide*. Ch. 13. Do the “Your Research Project Activities” |
| **Lesson 10**  **Nov. 18** | **Student Update Presentations & discussion**  **Readings & Discussion:**  *Writing Research Papers: A Complete Guide*. Ch. 14,15. Do the “Your Research Project Activities” at the end of each chapter; be prepared to discuss in class.  **Fourth Assignment Due: Outline of the Thesis Proposal & Faculty Feedback form** |
| **Lesson 11**  **Nov. 25** | **Topic: Second (Final) Peer Review**  **Rough Draft of Thesis Proposal Due to present to Peer Group** |
| **Lesson 12**  **Dec. 2** | **Topic: Final Student Update Presentation & discussion** |
| **Lesson 13**  **Dec. 9** | **Topic: Defense Preparation**  **Advisor Form (Printed out and Signed) Due** |
| **Lesson 14**  **Dec. 16** | **Thesis Proposal Due *(submitted on Neo)*** |

**n.b. The course schedule is subject to change**

1. **Course Requirements and Assessment (with estimated workloads)**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Assignment** | **Workload (average)** | **Weight in Final Grade** | **Evaluated Student Learning Outcomes** |  |
| Three in-class presentations (one student led practice 5% & two updates 2.5%) | 25 | 10% (in total) | Presentation skills, ability to explain the studied topic to peers, identify key issues, defend and incorporate criticism | (1, 2, 3) |
| Thesis proposal, 2000 words | 48 | 35% | Research skills, critical reading skills, critical writing skills, analytical skills, ability to form and answer a research question. | (1, 2) |
| Two peer group sessions | 10 | 10% (in total) | Presentation skills, ability to explain the studied topic to peers, identify key issues, defend and incorporate criticism, offer informed and constructive criticism | (1,2,3) |
| Four Homework Assignments | 25 | 30% (in total) | Development of skills concerning research, citation, and structuring and presenting an argument | (1,2) |
| Attendance and participation | 42 | 15% (in total) | Development of understanding of the various components of a thesis, how they are connected, proper structure and argumentation style, proper citation style, ability to use information from this and previous core courses to develop an original thesis and defend it, speaking skills, critical thinking skills.  Participation in class discussions. | (1,2,3) |
| TOTAL | 150 hours | 100% |  | |

\*1 = Critical Thinking; 2 = Effective Communication; 3 = Effective and Responsible Action

1. **Detailed description of the assignments**
2. **Homework:**

There four graded homework assignments:

1. Description of Topic Area & Proposed Research Question & Research Schedule
2. Working Thesis Statement & Proposed Bibliography
3. Revised Thesis Statement, Annotated Bibliography
4. Revised Outline of the Thesis & Faculty Feedback form

The assignments will be given on Neo.

Assessment Breakdown

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Assessed area | Percentage |
| Technical:   * using proper citations * providing a proper work cited * following the page/word limit and other technical guidelines/instructions * having a well-structured paper with an introduction, body, and conclusion * writing on the topic stated in the title * submitting the paper on time and in the required medium | 50% |
| Substantive:   * the quality of the accounts/arguments in your paper (logical flow, connections between parts, staying on topic, etc.) * the quality of the sources used in your paper * your ability to integrate the sources with your own ideas (not just repeating others’ work) * the degree to which you convey an accurate understanding of the materials/sources you are using and how they impact your topic | 50% |

1. **Peer Group Sessions:**

Students will be organized into peer groups, and they will meet in two class sessions.

In the first peer group session, students will read and provide constructive comments, criticisms and suggestions for the outlines for each member of their group. These comments etc. will be in both written form on the outlines as well as in oral form within the group.

In the second peer group session, students will present the rough drafts of their Thesis Proposals, and receive and offer constructive comments, criticisms and suggestions for these rough drafts of for each member of their group. This feedback will be in both written form (via notes taken during the presentation) as well as in oral form within the group.

In both peer group sessions, students should share problems they have encountered and solutions they have arrived at, as well as quality sources they have discovered.

Assessment Breakdown

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Assessed area | Percentage |
| Technical:   * being present * being prepared (having necessary print-outs, etc.) * working effectively | 50% |
| Substantive:   * reading/listening writing/communicating thoroughly and clearly * providing constructive and thorough feedback * staying on topic | 50% |

1. **In-Class Update Presentations:**

Each student will give two oral presentations to the class. Each presentation will be 10 – 15 minutes long and will concern the student’s progressing Thesis Proposal, outline of their argument, progress of their research, problems they have encountered, changes they have made, sources they are using, etc.

Assessment Breakdown

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Assessed area | Percentage |
| Technical:   * being present * being prepared (having main points/problems ready to discuss) | 50% |
| Substantive:   * quickly and clearly presenting basic information of work and progress of work * knowledge of potential problems/omissions and clear thoughts on potential solutions or clear and specific questions regarding these areas * demonstration of progress * staying on topic | 50% |

1. **Thesis Proposal:**

The thesis proposal should be 2000 words long. It should include the research question, thesis sentence, statement of relevance of the proposed research, proposed theory/ies overview, proposed methodology/ies overview, literature review, argument outline, chapter structure, proposed literature (no less than 20 sources) and bibliography. The omission of any section of the Thesis Proposal results in automatic failure.

**Plagiarism results in an automatic failure for the assignment. See the definition and examples of plagiarism in section 9.**

**The thesis proposal must be submitted via Turning on NEO by the due date and time.**

Assessment Breakdown

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Assessed area | Percentage |
| Technical:   * using proper citations (citing all the information which should be cited as well as properly formatting) * providing a proper work cited * following the page/word limit and other technical guidelines/instructions * having a well-structured paper with an introduction, body, and conclusion * writing on the topic stated in the title * submitting the paper on time and in the required medium and format | 50% |
| Substantive:   * the quality of the accounts/arguments in your paper (logical flow, connections between parts, staying on topic, etc.) * the quality of the sources used in your paper * your ability to integrate the sources with your own ideas (not just repeating others’ work) * the degree to which you convey an accurate understanding of the materials/sources you are using and how they impact your topic | 50% |

1. **Attendance and Participation:**

Attending and participating in class is one of the best ways to gain an understanding of the course topic and material. Participation is premised on having read the assignments for that particular day and actively engaging in the class discussion. Participation means contributing thoughtfully to the conversation or debate, asking questions if something is not understood, honestly attempting to answer questions even if you are not sure you are correct.

Absences will be excused only with notification from the Dean of Students. In case of prolonged excused absence, the student and lecturer will decide upon a way for the student to make up the work/missed material.

Assessment Breakdown

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Assessed area | Percentage |
| Technical:   * Be engaged critically in discussions and peer reviews | 10% |
| Substantive:   * evidence that the readings have been completed and understood * engaging in the class discussion * attempting to answer questions * asking questions when something is not understood * refraining from talking off topic * refraining from talking with individual students outside the bounds of the class discussion * refraining from using phones or computers for non-class purposes | 90% |

**Writing Assignments**

Writing assignments must be typed, paginated and double-spaced, in Times Roman 12 point font. Assignments are to be submitted electronically on NEO. The file name must include your name and the assignment name. The proposal will be evaluated in accordance with the AAU writing rubric, which includes organization, content, language and style, mechanics and citation. Corrected work will include substantive and appropriate instructor feedback.

## **8. General Requirements and School Policies**

***General requirements***

All coursework is governed by AAU’s academic rules. Students are expected to be familiar with the academic rules available in the Codex and Student Handbook and to maintain the highest standards of honesty and academic integrity in their work.

## **Electronic Communication and Submission**

The university and instructors shall only use students’ university email address for communication. It is strongly recommended that any email communication between students and instructors take place in NEO LMS.

Each e-mail sent to an instructor that is about a new topic (meaning not a reply to an original email) shall have a new and clearly stated subject and shall have the course code in the subject, for example: “COM101-1 Mid-term Exam. Question.”

All electronic submissions are carried out through NEO LMS. No substantial pieces of writing (especially take-home exams and essays) can be submitted outside of NEO LMS.

MS Teams will be used for remote communication.

## **Attendance**

Attendance is required. The university recommends, as a minimal policy, that students who are absent 35 percent of the course should be failed (or administratively withdrawn from the course if the absences are excused). Students are allowed three unexcused absences. Absences above this number may result in failure of the course. Remote students who do not attend the live streamed lecture will asked to provide a brief written summary of the lecture content.

## **Absence Excuse and Make-up Options**

Should the student be absent from a class for relevant reasons (illness, serious family matters), s/he needs to submit an Absence Excuse Form supplemented with documents proving the reasons for absence to the Dean of Students. Should a student be absent during the add/drop period due to a change in registration this will be an excused absence if they submit an Absence Excuse Form along with the finalized add/drop form. The form and documents must be submitted within one week of absence. If possible, it is recommended to inform the instructor about the absence in advance.

Students whose absence has been excused by the Dean of Students are entitled to make up missed exams provided that the nature of the exam allows for this. The students are responsible for contacting their instructor within one week from the date the absence was excused, and for making arrangements with the instructor about make-up options as necessary.

## **Late work**

## Please follow the deadlines. Late submissions will be penalized at the discretion of the instructor and may not be accepted.

## **Electronic devices**

Any electronic devices (phones, tablets, laptops…) may be used only for class-related activities (taking notes, looking up related information…). Any other use will result in being marked absent and/or being expelled from the class. Unless otherwise specified no electronic devices may be used during the exams.

## **Eating is not allowed during on-campus classes.**

## **Cheating and disruptive behavior**

If a student engages in disruptive or unsuitable conduct for a classroom environment of an institution of learning, the instructor may require the student to withdraw from the room for the duration of the activity or for the day and shall report the behavior to the Dean.

Students engaging in behavior which is suggestive of cheating (e.g. whispering or passing notes) will, at a minimum, be warned. In the case of continued misbehavior, the student will be expelled from the exam and the exam will be marked as failed.

## **Plagiarism and Academic Tutoring Center**

Plagiarism is “the unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one’s own original work.” (Random House Unabridged Dictionary, 2nd Edition, Random House, New York, 1993)

Turnitin’s White Paper ‘The Plagiarism Spectrum’ (available at

< <http://go.turnitin.com/paper/plagiarism-spectrum> >) identifies 10 types of plagiarism ordered from most to least severe:

1. CLONE: An act of submitting another’s work, word-for-word, as one’s own.
2. CTRL-C: A written piece that contains significant portions of text from a single source without alterations.
3. FIND–REPLACE: The act of changing key words and phrases but retaining the essential content of the source in a paper.
4. REMIX: An act of paraphrasing from other sources and making the content fit together seamlessly.
5. RECYCLE: The act of borrowing generously from one’s own previous work without citation; to self-plagiarise.
6. HYBRID: The act of combining perfectly cited sources with copied passages—without citation—in one paper.
7. MASHUP: A paper that represents a mix of copied material from several different sources without proper citation.
8. 404 ERROR: A written piece that includes citations to non-existent or inaccurate information about sources
9. AGGREGATOR: The “Aggregator” includes proper citation, but the paper contains almost no original work.
10. RE-TWEET: This paper includes proper citation, but relies too closely on the text’s original wording and/or structure.

As the minimum policy, the types of plagiarism from 1 through 8 result in a failing grade for the assignment and must be reported to the Dean. The Dean may initiate a disciplinary procedure pursuant to the Academic Codex. Allegations of bought papers and intentional or consistent plagiarism always entail a disciplinary hearing and may result in expulsion from AAU.

If unsure about technical aspects of writing, students are encouraged to consult with the tutors of the AAU Academic Tutoring Center about their papers. For more information and/or to book a tutor, please contact the ATC at: < <http://atc.simplybook.me/>>

## **Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities are asked to contact their instructor as soon as possible to discuss reasonable accommodation.

**9. Grading Scale**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Letter Grade** | **Percentage** | **Description** |
| A | 95 – 100 | **Excellent performance**. The student has shown originality and displayed an exceptional grasp of the material and a deep analytical understanding of the subject. |
| A- | 90 – 94 |
| B+ | 87 – 89 | **Good performance**. The student has mastered the material, understands the subject well and has shown some originality of thought and/or considerable effort. |
| B | 83 – 86 |
| B- | 80 – 82 |
| C+ | 77 – 79 | **Fair performance**. The student has acquired an acceptable understanding of the material and essential subject matter of the course, but has not succeeded in translating this understanding into consistently creative or original work. |
| C | 73 – 76 |
| C- | 70 – 72 |
| D+ | 65 – 69 | **Poor**. The student has shown some understanding of the material and subject matter covered during the course. The student’s work, however, has not shown enough effort or understanding to allow for a passing grade in School Required Courses. It does qualify as a passing mark for the General College Courses and Electives. |
| D | 60 – 64 |
| F | 0 - 59 | **Fail**. The student has not succeeded in mastering the subject matter covered in the course. |

HSS 389 is a Pass/Fail course. However, assignments throughout the semester will be graded according to the normal percentage scale to communicate the degree of correctness; more than 70% overall is required to pass the course.

It is not possible to pass the course if the Thesis Proposal is failed.

Submitted by Karen Grunow-HarstaKaren Grunow-Hårsta

Approved by: Dean of SHSS