

SO 498 Senior Thesis
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SD'00
Png

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is the last in a series of courses that takes the student from data analysis to research methods to conducting research to writing a thesis. The thesis (in this course) that the student is expected to produce must demonstrate his or her competence in incorporating theory, research methodology, data analysis, and interpretation of results in relation to theory and the substantive area within the behavioral sciences. The student will be directed by the instructor, who will provide guidance with respect to resources, methodology, theory, and feedback. The student can expect to write a number of drafts that will be returned with comments and suggestions. The student and the instructor will meet on a regular basis, most probably weekly.

OBJECTIVES:

- Provide a direction to the student's research.
- Provide a venue for exchange of ideas regarding the research paper.
- Prepare the student to present his or her paper to the faculty and peers.
- Produce an acceptable research paper, the senior thesis.

GRADING:

The student's grade will be determined by two factors: 1) the quality of the thesis, as indicated by the feedback to the student in the weekly meetings with the instructor, and 2) the quality of the student's presentation of the thesis. In part, the quality of the presentation will be determined by the nature of the feedback made by the faculty regarding theory, methodology, and the interpretation and conclusions based on the research findings.

AN/SO 498: SENIOR THESIS

Suggested Thesis Format (For Qualitative or Quantitative Research) January 5, 2000

The following is a suggested format for the Senior Thesis. You should remember that portions of the following will vary dramatically depending on your research goals and questions, and you may have to add sections not included below.

- I. Title Page
- II. Abstract
 - A. Short summary of research question and conclusions
- III. Introduction
 - A. The nature of the topic (social problem) of your research
 - B. Why the topic was chosen
 - C. Specific research question(s)
 1. Be very explicit—what were the questions you were asking?
 2. Hypothesis statement (if you are testing a hypothesis)
 - D. The significance of your study
 - E. Description of research site (history if relevant)
- IV. The Literature Review
 - A. Prior work in area
 1. Conceptual works on the topic or problem
 2. Research done on the topic or problem
 3. Theoretical approach(es) that have been, or could be, used to study the topic
 4. Which theory(ies) did you use to formulate your questions and conclusions?
- V. Method Section
 - A. What was your target population?
 1. Did you sample from this population and how did you sample?
 2. Use your data to describe your sample
 - B. What method(s) did you use to gather your data?
 1. Process followed in conducting your research (whether it was a survey, experiment, or field research)
 - a. Time period, procedures, specific number of subjects interviewed (used or surveyed), etc.
 - C. Conceptual and operational definitions of your key variables
 - D. How did you analyze your data or what statistics did you use to analyze your data?
(Whatever was relevant to your study.)
 - E. Note any weaknesses of your study due to methodological shortcomings
 1. Point out how these could affect your results and conclusions
- VI. Research Results
 - A. Field findings (or survey or experiment findings)
 1. What did you see, discover, or collect in your field data collection/observations.
 - a. Or from your survey or experiment—tables, graphs, inferential stats test(s) of hypothesis(es).
 2. You may want to consider incorporating (but not substituting for data) field conclusions into this section.
- VII. Discussion and Conclusions
 - A. Summarize your research findings (if not already done in previous section)
 1. Discuss how findings relate to your research question(s), previous research, and theory
 - B. What do you think happened and why?
 - C. If you were to continue the research what would you expand?
 - D. If others were to try the same research what would you tell them?
- VIII. References
- IX. Appendices
 - A. Most field data, tabular data, etc. should be here
 - B. Any documents or supporting evidence (from agencies etc.)
 - C. Survey instrument

(Note that you need to use the APA publication manual guidelines in terms of format, citation of sources & direct quotes, References page, etc.)