

Eastern Kentucky University
Department of Environmental Health Science
EHS 899 – Thesis (3 hours)
Spring Semester 2008

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Catalog Description: EHS 899 - Thesis in Health Science (3 hours). Prerequisite: advisor/course instructor/departmental approval prior to enrollment. Student-initiated directed study in thesis research and writing. Regular consultation with faculty supervisor and final project research paper required.

Emphasis will be on completion of Chapter 1 – Introduction, Chapter 2 – Literature Review, and a draft of Chapter 3 Methodology.

REQUIRED TEXT

No text is required. The 2008 EKU Graduate School Thesis Guidelines must be followed in writing the thesis paper. See <http://www.gradschool.eku.edu/current/thesis.php> for a copy.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students will:

1. Understand and apply ethical principles applicable to the research process.
2. Identify a specific research project, population, and methodology.
3. Formulate research questions, hypotheses, and null-hypotheses.
4. Conduct a review of the literature, (including but not limited to journals, books, and presentations, and with a maximum of 25% of references included from the Web).
5. Identify appropriate methodology, research design, and data analysis techniques.
6. Present to the Thesis Committee a presentation of a research proposal that follows Graduate School guidelines and instructions given by the course instructor.
7. Utilize the Graduate School Thesis Guidelines to write the first two chapters (Introduction and Literature Review) and a draft of the third chapter (Methodology) of a thesis.

MPH Program Objectives and Competencies Addressed in the Course

MPH Program objectives for the course will be agreed upon in the context of MPH Program competencies, through collaboration between the student and the instructor. (See the MPH Student Handbook referenced below, and the Course Schedule for a timeline.)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Successfully complete the NIH Tutorial on the protection of Human Subjects. (This may be completed in advance of the course. If so, keep proof of completion.)
2. Complete appropriate Institutional Review Board forms and documentation relative to the thesis project. All thesis projects must be approved and meet appropriate IRB criteria.
3. Complete all project work independently. (The faculty supervisor serves as a resource person to the student as the project is developed and completed.)
4. Establish and follow a schedule of regular consultation or meetings with the faculty instructor, and submit drafts of the paper as expected by the instructor.
5. Meet with the faculty instructor to identify appropriate MPH Program objectives and competencies to be addressed through the thesis research and completion, and secure the instructor's approval.
6. Establish a Thesis Committee consisting of the course instructor and two additional faculty members. Each student is responsible to invite the additional faculty members to serve, following consultation with and approval of the course instructor. The additional faculty members typically will be from the Departments of EHS or HPA, but a faculty member from another department may be invited, with approval from the course instructor.
7. Develop a research proposal—outline of Introduction, Initial Review of Literature, Methodology—for the thesis, and present the proposal to the instructor and Thesis Committee for approval. (The research topic selected by the student must be approved in advance by the faculty advisor. A thorough outline of the proposal must be submitted to the faculty supervisor for discussion before full development.)
8. Submit a final written paper to the instructor that includes Chapter 1 and 2, and a thorough draft of 3. The Scientific Style and Format: CBE Manual for Authors and Publishers, 6th edition, published by the Council of Biological Editors, should be used for references and citations, and the Graduate School Thesis Guidelines must be followed.

EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

The final grade for this course will be determined by the following:

1. Completion of the NIH Tutorial on the protection of Human Subjects and appropriate Institutional Review Board forms and documentation relative to the special project.
2. Adherence to scheduled consultations/meetings with the faculty instructor, and completion of drafts and revisions*
3. Present to the Thesis Committee a research proposal that meets instructions given by the course instructor and follows Graduate School guidelines.
4. Submission of a final written paper that includes Chapters 1 and 2, and a thorough draft of Chapter 3, and which meets Graduate School Guidelines and instructions given by the instructor.

Requirement	Points*
NIH Tutorial & IRB Approval	R
Scheduled meetings	R
Written & Oral Proposal	R
Final Report	100

Total Points	100
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*R = required to pass; no points assigned.

The following grading scale will be used for this course:

Grading Scale	
90-100%	A
80-89.9%	B
70-79.9%	C

Note that successful completion for a grade will include writing, review, and rewriting of Chapters 1, 2, and 3. An Incomplete (I) will be given if the above does not occur.

COURSE RELATIONSHIP TO THE MASTERS IN PUBLIC HEALTH (MPH) PROGRAM

To achieve its mission, the ECU MPH Program “prepares professionals for broad-based practice in public health, through the integration of core competencies in the five areas of knowledge basic to public health (behavioral sciences, biostatistics, epidemiology, environmental health science, and public health administration) with specialized knowledge, competencies, and expertise in a selected public health discipline area.” This course relates directly to accomplishment of the MPH Program educational objectives, and the core competencies and option-specific competencies. (See the MPH Student Handbook

http://www.mph.ecu.edu/Student_Resources/MPH_Handbook_Summer07_vs_082207.pdf#page=23&zoom=100).

Students choose MPH Program objectives and competences to address through the course project, **in consultation with the instructor**. This process includes identifying project goals and objectives, and establishing the relationship of the study experience to the MPH Program educational objectives and competencies. Please reference the objectives and competencies throughout the semester as they will provide a framework for this course and will contribute to your preparation for successfully completing other degree program requirements (e.g., comprehensive examination, capstone course, culminating experience presentation).

Relationship of this course to the MPH Program Culminating Experience

The MPH culminating experience required for completion of the MPH degree occurs through three components or experiences, and the project developed in this course is the foundation component. Students will:

1. **Execute a research/scholarship project in either a thesis or research course.**
2. Complete MPH 895, the MPH Capstone Course (1 credit hour).
3. Complete a presentation of their research/scholarship project that demonstrates their knowledge and mastery of selected public health objectives and competencies. (See the MPH 895 syllabus on the Program website (<http://www.mph.ecu.edu/Curriculum/>)).

Students in this course should be familiar with all three components, and as the research project is developed, think about how this project ultimately would be presented to an audience of faculty and students to meet the requirements of the culminating experience presentation. (See the MPH Student Handbook for a more detailed description of the presentation component of the culminating experience.)

COURSE SCHEDULE

- By end of Week 2: Meet with instructor to identify objectives and competencies, and Clarify schedule and timelines. Establish the Thesis Committee.
- By end of Week 4: Present and gain approval of thesis proposal.
- Weeks 4 - 13: Continue work on thesis; consult with instructor as needed.
- By end of Week 14: Submit final paper.

***Attendance and independent work:** The attendance policy will be discussed with each student. Meeting times, chat room times, and/or office visits will be clarified within the first two weeks of the semester. Students are expected to consult and/or meet with the instructor as indicated, and to write, review, and rewrite sections of the thesis as needed. Further, students are expected to complete all project work on their own, in a timely fashion, utilizing the faculty instructor as a resource person. The instructor reserves the right to deduct points for failure to meet attendance and progress expectations.

DISABILITY STATEMENT

If you are registered with the Office of Services for Individuals with Disabilities, please make an appointment with the course instructor to discuss any academic accommodations you need. If you need academic accommodations and are not registered with the Office of Services for Individuals with Disabilities, please contact the office on the third floor of the Student Services Building, by email at disabilities@eku.edu or by telephone at (859) 622-2933 V/TDD. Upon individual request, this syllabus can be made available in alternative forms.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT

Eastern Kentucky University will honor the University's Academic Integrity policy. By honoring and enforcing this policy, the University affirms that it will not tolerate academic dishonesty.

Guidelines for Thesis and Independent Study Work

The following outline is intended to help the student understand what traditionally is included in each section or chapter of a thesis or special research project.

Chapter 1: Introduction

- background information and rationale for the research
- purpose or need for the research
- research and null hypotheses
- significance of study
- operational definitions
- basic assumptions and limitations

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

- critical analysis and discussion of other studies directly relevant to your research (show the reader you are familiar with current issues in the field and indicate how your research contributes to such)
- Be careful not to plagiarize!

Chapter 3: Methods

- Participants—who (total #; age; sex; race; education level., etc)
- Instrument—how data gathered (i.e., survey)
- Procedures—describe exactly what was done (step-by-step) to carry out the study
- Design and Analysis—how data entered and analyzed

Chapter 4: Results

- Report data and statistical findings
- Includes written results, tables, and graphs
- **No** explanations, discussions, conclusions

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions

- Summary and discussion and major findings and possible explanations (make links between purpose of your study and findings and the literature)
- Present limitations and implications
- Suggestions for future research.
- Leave reader with a strong sense that what you set out to do has been completed

Appendices

- Important information which, if placed in the main text, would distract the reader from the flow of the argument
- Raw data examples and reorganized data

Bibliography (thesis)

- Citation of all articles, texts, other materials referred to in the study