

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
LONDON CANADA

Management and Organizational Studies
MOS 4999E Section 001
Honors Thesis

1.0 CALENDAR DESCRIPTION

Independent research under the direction of a faculty member.

Prerequisites: Enrolment in 4th year of an Honors Specialization in Consumer Behavior or Human Resources Management of BMOS.

1.0 course

2.0 COURSE INFORMATION

Individual Faculty members will supervise students to undertake an independent research project. Details of each project will be determined by consultation between faculty and students.

3.0 INFORMATION AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Throughout the year there additional information and announcements will be posted if applicable. This information will be available either on the DAN webpage: www.dan.uwo.ca or in the DAN office located in Room 4330 SSC.

Students are responsible for checking these sources on a regular basis for further important information, including deadlines, the formats required for written and oral work, and marks for various assignments.

4.0 COURSE DESCRIPTION AND INFORMATION

BMOS students registered in the 4th year of the Honors Specialization in Consumer Behavior or Human Resources Management (on main campus only) may take MOS 4999E. The major focus of this course is on the completion and presentation of an honors thesis research project in the discipline of Consumer Behavior or Human Resource Management.

THE THESIS.

An undergraduate Consumer Behavior/Human Resource Management honors thesis is a major research project in DAN carried out by a 4th year honors DAN student under the direction of a qualified DAN supervisor (e.g., a full-time DAN professor on main campus). The DAN thesis is to be an empirical project that involves data collection. It is not a purely theoretical paper, nor just an in-depth review of the literature. The student is generally expected to play a role in all phases of the 4th year thesis research project, including conceptualization, preparing materials and methods, data collection and analysis, and write-up. Please note that if a proposed project is unsuitable for an honors thesis, the faculty supervisor may require modifications or the development of an alternate project that is suitable.

OBTAINING A THESIS SUPERVISOR.

It is your responsibility to locate a qualified DAN supervisor who will supervise your honors thesis project. Please note that all full-time faculty members of the Consumer Behavior or Human Resources Management module in DAN may serve as supervisors for 4th year honors theses.

Prepare carefully before you meet with a potential supervisor to discuss the possibility of supervision. You should be able to provide this person with an idea of what you might wish to do for a thesis topic. Familiarity with the potential advisor's research interests is highly recommended.

MEETINGS WITH YOUR SUPERVISOR.

It is highly recommended that you schedule a regular meeting time with your supervisor. A regular series of meetings, perhaps on a weekly basis, will help ensure the timely completion of each major phase of your thesis (i.e., Ethics Protocol, Introduction, Method, Data Collection, Data Analyses, Poster Presentation, and Final Write-up). To assist you in planning your time, an illustrative schedule for completing the various phases of your thesis project is presented later in this course outline.

Your thesis supervisor will be prepared to offer you help on various thesis-related concerns, such as conceptual and ethical issues, research design considerations, and data analysis and interpretation questions. During the initial phases of your project, your supervisor may also recommend readings associated with your thesis topic. Throughout the year, your supervisor will provide you with feedback on written work you may submit for comment.

5.0 FURTHER COMPONENTS OF THE COURSE

There are several additional components of this course that will contribute to your final overall grade. These components include a written ethics review protocol and preliminary written versions of both your thesis introduction and method.

ETHICS PROTOCOL.

A written ethics review protocol will be reviewed and graded by the faculty supervisor. This protocol will consist of a brief description of the procedural aspects of your proposed thesis study, followed by a detailed consideration of how ethical research concerns will be treated. All students are required to hand in an ethics review protocol (even if the research has been approved by other ethics review boards). The ethics protocol **MUST** be approved prior to any data collection and is worth 10% of your final grade in the course.

PRELIMINARY WRITTEN THESIS INTRODUCTION AND METHOD SECTIONS.

A preliminary written version of your thesis introduction will be graded by the faculty supervisor. A preliminary written version of your thesis method section also will be graded by the faculty supervisor. These two written assignments, along with the final written version of your thesis, should meet the essay requirement for this course (i.e., a minimum of 5000 words of cohesive discourse).

6.0 ADDITIONAL POINTS

1. Completion of All Assignments. The assignments in this course are sequential and build upon each other. Accordingly, it is expected that students will complete each and every assignment in this course on time, in the proper sequence. Failure to do so may result in serious penalties, up to and including not passing this course.

2. Late Penalties. Please note very carefully that all assignments must be completed by their due date. **There will be no extensions of any due dates in this course.** Accordingly, late penalties will be assessed for assignments not completed in time. If you miss a deadline, three percent of the worth of that assignment will be deducted for each day you are late.

3. Illness. On occasion, a student may require an extension of a deadline for **legitimate** medical or compassionate reasons. It is *the student's responsibility* to inform the faculty supervisor of these reasons **prior** to the due date, and to provide acceptable documentation to support a medical or compassionate claim. If granted an extension, a due date must be established, in writing. Any extensions beyond the end of class must have the consent of the faculty supervisor, the Director of the Program, and the Dean's office. Documentation is mandatory, including an appropriately signed "Recommendation of Incomplete" form.

If you feel that you have a medical or personal problem that is interfering with your work, you should contact the faculty supervisor and the Faculty Academic Counselling Office *as soon as possible*. Problems may be then documented and possible arrangements to assist you can be discussed at the time of occurrence rather than on a retroactive basis.

5. Policy on Scholastic Offences: Plagiarism, Cheating, and other forms of Academic Misconduct

Students are responsible for understanding the nature of and avoiding the occurrence of plagiarism and any other academic offences. Students should read the section on Scholastic Offences in the Academic Calendar. Note that such offences include plagiarism, cheating on an examination or falsifying material subject to academic evaluation, submitting false or fraudulent assignments or credentials, submitting a false medical or other such certificate under false pretences, intentionally interfering in any way with any person's scholastic work, impersonating a candidate, or submitting for credit in any course without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought in another course in the University or elsewhere. Please make sure that you understand what constitutes academic misconduct and a scholastic offence. A claim that "you didn't know it was wrong" is not acceptable as an excuse for misconduct.

Plagiarism. In writing scholarly papers, you must keep firmly in mind the need to avoid plagiarism. Plagiarism is the unacknowledged borrowing of another writer's words or ideas. The following rules pertain to the acknowledgements necessary in academic papers: (1) in using another writer's words, you must both place the words in quotation marks and acknowledge that the words are those of another writer, (2) in adopting another writer's ideas, you must acknowledge that writer as the source of these ideas.

Penalties. The penalties for a student guilty of a scholastic offence include a reprimand, a requirement that the student repeat and resubmit the assignment, a failing grade in the assignment, a failing grade in the course, suspension from the University, and expulsion from the University.

6. Appealing Academic Evaluations. In the first instance, all appeals of a grade must be made at the course level (via informal consultation with the faculty supervisor). If the student is not satisfied with the decision a written appeal must be sent to the Officer of Undergraduate Affairs in DAN. If the response of the program is considered unsatisfactory to the student, the student may then appeal to the Dean of the Faculty of Social Science. Only after receiving a final decision from the Dean, may a student appeal to the Senate Review Board Academic. A Guide to Appeals is available from the Ombudsperson's Office.

7.0 MOS 4999E: SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS, % OF FINAL GRADE

1. Paper: Ethics Review Protocol 10%
2. Paper: Preliminary Introduction 20%
3. Paper: Preliminary Method 20%
4. Completed Written Thesis 50%

8.0 ILLUSTRATIVE SCHEDULE FOR THESIS COMPLETION

1. Finalize Thesis Supervisor and Complete Initial Work on Thesis Topic: Early to mid Sept.
2. Conceptualization of Specific Issue to be addressed in Thesis: By late Sept.
3. Conceptualization of Thesis Procedure and Ethical Clearance: By mid Oct.
4. Write introduction, design study, and begin to take data if possible: By mid Dec.
(Preliminary Method due late Jan.)
5. Data collection: Completed by mid Feb.
6. Data analysis: By early March
7. Final Thesis Write-up: Completed thesis draft to supervisor by mid March
(to receive feedback prior to revising and handing in final copy of thesis by early April)

NOTE. The above illustrative schedule provides a general guide for completion dates. Your thesis project may vary somewhat. As such, you may wish to establish with your supervisor a specific timetable for completing each major phase of your thesis. When scheduling your project, you should note that some studies may require a more complicated process (and thus longer time period)

As one specific illustration, the Guidelines used by the UWO Research Ethics Board for Nonmedical research involving humans subjects (NMREB: 2002, page 3) state that,

"Under most circumstances, the NMREB will follow the principle that no deception should be involved in research. Therefore, if the research involves the practice of deception where participations are purposely misled as part of the research project, it must be justified as important and as the only alternative. Further there should be no foreseeable risk of harm or potential for the perception of harm or embarrassment by the subject and there must be a full explanation and "debriefing" soon after completion of the experiment."

Thus, you should carefully note that any proposed study involving deception may result in a more complicated and time-consuming ethical approval procedure. Finally, when you are designing your thesis project, you should also note that DAN does not have any funds available for research support for fourth year honors theses.

9.0 EVALUATION

DAN follows the University of Western Ontario grading guidelines, which are as follows (see http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/general/grades_undergrad.pdf):

A+ 90-100 One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level

A 80-89 Superior work that is clearly above average

B 70-79 Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory

C 60-69 Competent work, meeting requirements

D 50-59 Fair work, minimally acceptable

F below 50 Fail

10.0 STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC OFFENCES

Students are responsible for understanding the nature and avoiding the occurrence of plagiarism and other scholastic offenses. Plagiarism and cheating are considered very serious offenses because they undermine the integrity of research and education. Actions constituting a scholastic offense are described at the following link:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

All written assignments will be submitted to TurnItIn, a service designed to detect and deter plagiarism by comparing written material to over 5 billion pages of content located on the Internet or in TurnItIn's databases. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Possible penalties for a scholastic offense include failure of the assignment, failure of the course, suspension from the University, and expulsion from the University.