

Ethnic Studies 290B: Masters Thesis Preparation

Mondays 1 pm - 3:50 pm, Spring 2009

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Office Hours: Monday noon-1pm and Wednesday 1-3 pm

Readings will be on library reserves or handed out in class.

Purpose and Rationale:

Writing a Master's Thesis is the first of the major benchmarks in our graduate program. It requires you to undertake a significant research project and engage in intensive writing for the better part of a year. The focus of this course is on writing and completing the thesis. Each week you will be devoting a significant amount of time to your thesis work. When writing is due for class evaluation, please make copies for everyone (and the instructor) and place in their mailboxes by the due date. When you are reading your colleagues' work, make thoughtful and constructive suggestions for improvement and put them in writing. Providing feedback and useful critiques of others' work is an important part of academic life, so it will be emphasized as well. The major goal of the course is to have you build on and complete the fundamental building blocks of your thesis (including conceptualization and research question(s), introduction, literature review, research methods, evidence/data, and analysis). Throughout the course, the instructor will include a focus on professionalization and career issues as well.

Schedule

March 30	Introductions, clarifications, and setting goals
April 6	Discussions and feedback on Group A papers
April 13	Discussions and feedback on Group B papers
April 20	Discussion on community school development, pedagogy, indigenous rights, and intellectual activism with Ann Milne, principal of Te Whanau o Tupuranga (a Year 7-13 'special character,' Maori bilingual Secondary School) and Clover Park Middle School (a Year 7-10 Middle School). Aotearoa / New Zealand
April 27	Discussions and feedback on Group A papers
May 4	Discussions and feedback on Group B papers
May 11	Discussions and feedback on Group A papers
May 18	Discussions and feedback on Group B papers

- May 25 No class. Revise papers and meet with faculty advisors
- June 1 Discussions and feedback on remaining papers and issues.
- June 8 Final Class (if needed)

Structure/Requirements:

- Email drafts of your writing for group crit – every other week – total of 3 drafts.
When it is your turn to submit your work, please be sure to email it to all of us by Saturday midnight. Do not submit more than 30 pages. When you submit your work, please situate it within the larger thesis and let us know what kind of help you most need with your piece.
- Lead discussions on your partner’s draft – every other week.
- Off-line discussions with your partners – the week before you present
- Office hours – at least once during quarter after your first and before your last presentation. Come with your partner(s) if possible.

	M	T	W	R	F	S	Sun
off-line week	print & exchange drafts in class Bring snacks	meet off-line with partners to discuss drafts				Email revised draft to all by midnight	Read drafts & prepare comments
	M	T	W	R	F	S	Sun
crit week	lead discussion on a partner’s draft						Read drafts & email questions to all by midnight

Piled Higher and Deeper by Jorge Cham

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WRITING YOUR THESIS OUTLINE

NOTHING SAYS "I'M ALMOST DONE" TO YOUR ADVISOR/ SPOUSE/PARENTS LIKE PRETENDING YOU HAVE A PLAN

STEP 1 Aim for a respectable number of chapters:

8 = "That's IT??"
6-7 = "Not bad"
8+ = "Are you crazy??"

STEP 2 Fill in the "freebies":

THESIS OUTLINE

1. INTRODUCTION
2. LIT REVIEW
3. METHODOLOGY
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
7. CONCLUSIONS

You're half way done!

STEP 3 Make up titles for the "meat" chapters:

1. LIT REVIEW
2. METHODOLOGY
3. (THAT STUFF YOU DID YOUR FIRST YEAR)
4. (STUFF YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE LEARNING)
5. (MAKE STUFF UP)
6. CONCLUSIONS

(It'll be years before you actually have to work on that later chapter, and by then your thesis topic will have changed anyway)

STEP 4 Voilà! You just bought yourself another two years

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