

# **Syllabus / ENV - 400**

## **Senior Thesis Seminar**

### **Course description**

The Environmental Studies Senior Seminar brings together majors with different course backgrounds to analyze environmental problems using an interdisciplinary approach. The seminar will guide students through key issues in research design, from choosing a topic, through selecting approaches to researching it, to conducting research, drawing conclusions and summarizing the results in written form. While the students will be able to draw on a textbook to aid them in understanding the research process in ecological science, emphasis will be placed on how such research is actually conducted. To this end, the students will review and discuss empirical articles published in a variety of natural science journals. At the end of semester, students will focus mostly on completing their research and writing of the thesis. Each student will be required to present the results of their research to their colleagues at the end of the course. In addition, this course is intended to offer you the opportunity to conduct independent research under the guidance of a supervisor. It will also train you to present scientific results during oral presentations and in a written thesis. Your supervisor(s) will also have the opportunity to evaluate your capability to conduct individual, independent research as you develop your Senior Thesis.

### **Lecturer**

Mairambek Nurgaziev, Associate Professor (PhD)

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### *Contact with the lecturer:*

Students should feel free to keep in touch with me and to ask for guidance throughout their research. There are no formal office hours, but I will be available on request, either immediately after the class, or by appointment via the email. There will be several days in the semester during which we will have no classes. Students should spend this time working towards the completion of their research. I will be available for consultation during these times, unless otherwise specified.

### **Class meets twice a week:**

Lectures: 9:25 - 10:40 on Monday

Seminars: 9:25 - 10:40 on Wednesday

**Online course tools and materials:** The course will be conducted mainly using the Zoom program, if necessary, additional tools such as Webex, Whatsapp and Skype can be used. In addition, all course materials will be available in the e-course system.

### **Research assignments**

An important component of the seminar is the completion of original and independent student research. Students who choose to write an honors thesis may expand this research project into their Environmental Studies thesis during the semester.

Your research goal is to create a product that could move the debate by clearly stating and answering a question. The specific topics and format will be developed in discussion with course leaders and thesis committees (if applicable). As noted in the schedule, the goal of the seminar is to approach this potentially daunting task in stages. You are responsible for planning ahead and staying on top of these deadlines in order to finish your thesis on time.

#### ASSIGNMENT POINTS

Mid-term test and final examination	20 and 30, <b>total 50</b> (maximum)
1 presentation and one home or class assignment	10 (maximum for each), <b>total 30</b>
Active participation, note-taking	<b>5</b> each 2
Bonus for attending classes	<b>10</b>

Withdrawal of grades in case of poor attendance without reason

Minus 5 for each failure to attend

A 100-95	B- 76-71	D+ 47-42
A- 94-89	C+ 70-60	D 41-36
B+ 88-83	C 59-54	D- 35-30
B 82-77	C- 53-48	F < 30

**Work and attendance:** The work and attendance of all students will be monitored. Students are expected to attend all lectures and seminars. Attendance is regarded as a part of the course. This is for the benefit of the students and helps to ensure that they are coping with the work and managing to comprehend all the information and complete all the tasks given to them. Students must come to class on time not to disturb others, being more than 10 minutes late is counted as an absence. Students are not allowed to use any mobile devices or portable computers in class, this is considered as a “negative” participation and participation points be deducted for that.

**Documentation of reasons for absence:** Any valid reasons for absence should be reported to the Lecturer as soon as possible. Legitimate excuses are the following: illness, confirmed by a doctor's note next class; a death in the family; participation in conferences or seminars with preliminary notification of the Lecturer and submission of the relevant supporting documents. Unless the correct procedure is followed no allowances can be made.

#### Textbook and readings:

1. Practical Research Planning and Design. Paul D. Leedy and Jeanne Ellis Ormrod. (*Tenth Edition, 2014*) LPN HE 13104 0384;
2. How to Write a Better Thesis. David Evans, Paul Gruba, Justin Zobel. *Third Edition. Springer International Publishing Switzerland 2014*;
3. Practical Research Methods. Catherine Dawson. *Magdalen Road, Oxford OX4 1RE. United Kingdom, 2002*;
4. A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations. Kate L. Turabian. *University of Chicago Press. —7th ed., published 2007*;

5. Research methods: the basics. Nicholas Walliman. *Published in the Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2011.*

### **Intellectual Responsibility**

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will be reported to the SSC. Direct quotes from the work of another and paraphrased text should always be cited.

### **Format:**

The format of the senior thesis diploma should be based on the Chicago Style Format. The material will be available each semester on the university's e-course website (*Chicago Manual of Style. University of Chicago Press, sixteenth edition. Revised March, 2013*). In general, the senior paper should be well organized (*visible and readable*).

### **Requirements for the Diploma Thesis:**

#### *1. Selection and approval of the topic for the thesis research:*

The choice of the topic for the thesis involves a preliminary discussion with the supervisor or at a meeting of the department. Finally, the topic of the thesis research is approved at a meeting of the department during the first semester of the last year of study. After approval, the exact wording of the topic is recorded, indicating the full name of the student and the supervisor, his/her status, place of work and position, and the date of approval of the topic is recorded. The reviewer is appointed after writing the thesis.

#### *2. Work on the diploma:*

The work on the thesis begins with the preparation of a work plan or program. The plan is coordinated with the supervisor, who determines the timing of specific tasks and forms of control. The thesis must be completed and submitted to the department no later than a week before the defense day. The date of completion of the thesis is registered by the office manager of the department.

#### *3. Structure and content of the diploma:*

The thesis study consists of an introduction, the main part and conclusion, as well as a list of references. Chapters should be balanced in content and volume to the maximum extent possible. In most cases, papers should contain between 3-4 chapters.

The introduction includes the following points:

- a) justification of the choice of the thesis research topic, its relevance and novelty;
- b) determination of the purpose and complex of research tasks, as well as methods of their solution;
- c) indication of the object of research, justification of the choice of material for research;
- d) analysis of the degree of development of the topic in domestic and foreign literature, review of the historical development of the issue.

The volume of the main part should be at least 35-50 pages. The conclusion reflects the evaluation of the work and includes recommendations for the practical use of its results. The number of literatures involved must be at least 25 and no more than 50 items.

#### *4. Requirements for the design of the thesis:*

The diploma should be provided in a separate folder, which includes, in addition to the thesis, the reviewer's review, as well as the diploma abstract compiled by the senior student. The title page contains the following information: 1) the full names of the educational institution, faculty and department; 2) the topic of the thesis; 3) the surname, first name of the senior student; 4) the surname and first name of the supervisor, his/her academic degree and title; 4) the city and year of writing the thesis.

***Week Dates Class Readings Research***

<b>Week</b>	<b>Class</b>	<b>Readings</b>	<b>Research</b>
	Thesis writing (during the semester)	Lecture materials	
1	Introduction: How to Write a Better Thesis	2014, David Evans, Paul Gruba, Justin Zobel), Third Edition	Potential research questions
2	Selecting a Topic and an Approach	<i>Practical Research Methods</i> (Dr. Catherine Dawson, 2002)	
3	Formulating a Research Questions, Objectives and Hypothesis	<i>Practical Research Methods</i> (Dr. Catherine Dawson, 2002)	
4	Literature Review	<i>Practical Research Methods</i> (Dr. Catherine Dawson, 2002)	Literature search
5	How to Write a Better Thesis: Research planning and design	2014, David Evans, Paul Gruba, Justin Zobel), Third Edition	
6	Writing a Proposal/Purpose Statement/Abstract	<i>Practical Research Methods</i> (Dr. Catherine Dawson, 2002)	Outline
7	<b>Midterm Exam:</b> Based on the preliminary results and interviews		
8	How to Write a Better Thesis: Establishing Your Contribution	2014, David Evans, Paul Gruba, Justin Zobel), Third Edition	
9	How to Write a Better Thesis: Establishing Your Contribution	2014, David Evans, Paul Gruba, Justin Zobel), Third Edition	
10	How to Write a Better Thesis: Outcomes and Results	2014, David Evans, Paul Gruba, Justin Zobel), Third Edition	
11	How to Write a Better Thesis: The Discussion or Interpretation	2014, David Evans, Paul Gruba, Justin Zobel), Third Edition	
12	Towards Completing a research thesis		
13	<b>Final exam:</b> (research performance) Based on the final results (submission of a complete senior thesis) and oral presentation		